

## Fruit in the Classroom

### Microclimates & Michigan Fruit Production

**Michigan is a major fruit producing state.**

Students can study Michigan fruit production and the microclimates created by lake effects through observing and analyzing a series of maps.

Michigan's fruit belt runs the western length of the lower peninsula. Due to westerly winds over Lake Michigan, these areas experience cooler springs, which prevent fruit trees from blossoming too early. The warm winds in the fall create the perfect conditions for gradual fruit ripening. Michigan's fertile, sandy soils also favor the deep roots of fruit trees.

### **So you want to be a farmer?**

By studying the top agricultural products for each county, students gain an understanding of how geography plays a critical role in agriculture. After learning about the various growing conditions and industries throughout the state, students create a plan for what they would like to grow and where.

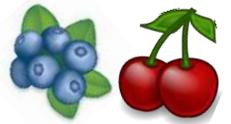
Image source: Michigan Geographic Alliance and the Science/Mathematics/Technology Center, Central Michigan University

Interested in volunteering with farm to school activities?  
Sign up for our volunteer newsletter at:  
[www.groundworkcenter.org/farmtoschoolvolunteer](http://www.groundworkcenter.org/farmtoschoolvolunteer)



March Harvest of the Month

## Berries & Cherries



**groundwork**  
CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**



**FARM to SCHOOL**  
NORTHWEST MICHIGAN

**Extension**

# Berrylicious Smoothie Recipe

**Prep time:** 2 min  
**Cook time:** 0 minutes  
**Estimated Cost:** \$3  
**Serves** 2-4

## Ingredients:

1/2 cup orange juice  
1/2 banana, sliced  
1 cup strawberries  
1/2 cup blueberries  
1/2 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt



## Directions:

Combine orange juice and yogurt in a blender. Add banana, strawberries and blueberries.

Blend until smooth, 30-45 seconds.

Tip: For a colder smoothie, you can use frozen fruit. Try this basic recipe with any fruits you like- you can even add greens such as spinach or kale to increase the health factor!

## Fruit Freezing Tips

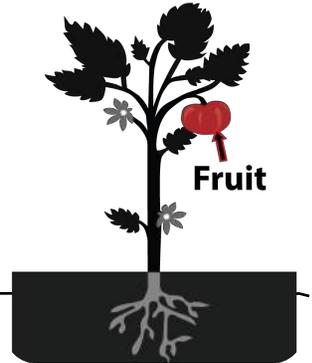
Buy fresh fruit in season and freeze it to use in smoothies or desserts later in the year! Rinse fresh fruit, remove pits (if necessary), and place on a baking sheet in a single layer. Freeze for one to two hours, then remove and place in a freezer-proof bag to use as needed.



# Fun Facts About Fruit

## Plant Parts

- Did you know that plants such as zucchini and tomatoes are technically fruits? In botany (the study of plants) fruits are defined as plant parts that contain seeds.
- Take a second look at some of your favorite vegetables and you may be surprised by how many are technically fruits!



## Origins



- It is believed the Romans discovered cherries in Asia Minor around 70 BC.
- The word 'cherry' comes from the Turkish town of Cerasus.
- 150 to 200 pounds of tart cherries are produced annually in Michigan which has nearly 4 million cherry trees.

## Michigan Agriculture



- Michigan is the largest agricultural producer of black beans, cranberry beans, blueberries, tart cherries, pickling cucumbers and Niagara grapes in the US.
- Michigan is also the third largest apple producer in the country. The state flower is the apple blossom (pictured at left!)

To find your own fruit to freeze, visit [localdifference.org](http://localdifference.org) to search for local food, farms, and retailers.

Past freezing time? Farm to Freezer flash freezes local fruits and vegetables so you can enjoy them all year long!