

U-PICK OPERATIONS

1. Location:

- On farm
- Near populations/customers
- Along well traveled roads
- Away from similar operations

2. Site:

- Elevation to prevent frost damage
- Soil suited for specific mix of fruit
- Good sunlight and wind circulation

3. Mix of fruit:

- Plant popular small fruits (ie strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, saskatoons)
- Plant popular trees(apples, pears, Asian pears, European plums)
- Select a mix that ripens over the length of season that fits what you want.

4. Size of operation:

- For berries, plant from $\frac{1}{4}$ acre to 2 acres per type of berry for U-Pick.
- For tree fruits, remember that each tree will produce from 30 – 100 pounds of fruit. (1/2 – 2 bushels)
- The size of the operation can increase if some of the fruit is to be marketed outside the U-pick. (ie farm market or direct to other outlets such as restaurants)
- Size will also depend on your experience and workforce

5. Traditional vs organic:

- There is an increasing demand for organic fruit and vegetables
- Do you want to spray traditional vs organic

6. Key insect pests:

- Plum curculio
- Apple maggot
- Scale

- Aphids
- Codling moth
- SWD

7. Key diseases:

- Leaf spot
- Mildew
- Scab
- Brown rot

8. Equipment needed:

- Small tractor(30 -50 hp)
- Sprayer depending on size of operation(back pack, 20 gallon battery operated, PTO/ 50 – 100 gallon sprayer)
- Weed sprayer
- Small tiller
- Small mower
- Pruning tools

9. U-pick supplies:

- Picking bags for tree fruits/baskets(1/2 and 1 bushel in size)
- ¼, ½, and peck bags
- Pint and quart containers
- Static tent with U-pick supplies under/including a water supply to wash hands and buckets
- Secure container for customers to leave \$\$ if no employees are present.
- Or small building where customers can report to to obtain containers, buckets and pay for fruit.
- If customers are allowed to hand pick fruit trees, employees need to be present to teach them how and where to pick.

10. Advertising:

- Word of mouth
- Facebook
- Local newspaper
- Quality signage

11. Some owners also offer CSA opportunities.