



Fruit businesses assess damage after Wenatchee fire

Geraldine Warner // Jun 30, 2015 // Cherries // Production // Updates

A wildfire that started as a brush fire near Wenatchee over the weekend affected several tree fruit businesses and destroyed 28 homes.

Embers from the burning houses on the outskirts of Wenatchee ignited paper packaging materials at Michelsen Packaging in downtown Wenatchee, *according to Wenatchee World news reports*.

The fire then spread to nearby businesses including packing plants owned by Blue Bird and Stemilt Growers, Inc., the orchard supply company Northwest Wholesale, and the premises of Doc Farwell Products, Inc., which makes tree grafting seals.

No one at Blue Bird was available for comment.

Brianna Shales, communications manager at Stemilt Growers, Inc., said the fire damaged the packing facility at Miller Street, where Rainier cherries were being packed.

The roof of the building was damaged, but she said it would be several days before company staff would be able to enter the building to assess other damage. Meanwhile, another packing company would pack the rest of their Rainiers. After the cherry season, the facility is used for pear packing, which begins mid-August.

Northwest Wholesale

Lee Gale, horticulturist at Northwest Wholesale, Inc., said both the administrative office and the main chemical warehouse were spared by the fire, though some of the company's other buildings were damaged.

The company supplies agricultural chemicals, nutrients, and other products to fruit growers, and corrugated boxes and packaging to fruit packers.

"We lost our oil pumping facility," Gale said. "And we lost some of our storage buildings for fertilizer and cardboard and packing supplies, but for the most part, we're in pretty good shape."

"It could have been a lot worse," he added. "If it had taken down our main warehouse with all our ag chem in it, that would have been a nightmare."

He said the nearby Doc Farwell building was destroyed.

By [Geraldine Warner](#) | June 30th, 2015 | [Cherries](#), [Geraldine Warner](#), [Issues](#), [Production](#), [Updates](#)

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Geraldine Warner was the editor of Good Fruit Grower from 1992-2015. During her tenure, she planned and prepared editorial content, wrote for the magazine, and managed the editorial team. **Read her stories:** [Story Index](#)

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