

American Fruit Grower® Magazine Announces 2024 Apple Grower of the Year

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Globe-Trotting Washington State Grower Earns Prestigious Award*

WILLOUGHBY, OH, USA, August 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tim Welsh of Wenatchee, WA, who drew support from throughout the apple industry – including from an unprecedented three past winners - has been named the 2024 American Fruit GrowerSM Apple Grower of the Year. The award is presented by American Fruit Grower[®] magazine, published by [Meister Media Worldwide](#).

Welsh started picking apples as a kid, became a field man, then just kept working his way up. Today he is Chief Orchardist, Columbia Orchard Management. “Columbia Fruit Packers was bought out by a private equity group in 2022, so my job transitioned. A job I’d had for 34 years at the time transitioned to a new job, a new company, new people, and so it’s been a unique change,” he said. “But I feel like I’ve been in this industry that long, sort of in the same sort of evolving role, with my feet on the ground first as a field man, and then moving into orchard management, and then finally overseeing orchards for all of my company.”

Welsh, who will be featured on the cover of the Aug/Sept issue of American Fruit Grower magazine, will receive the Apple Grower of the Year Award in his hometown of Wenatchee in front of family and friends, which is appropriate for the affable Welsh.

“It’s quite an honor to be Apple Grower of the Year, and when I think about it I think about the relationships that have been built over the years with people and how that’s really, probably, what elevated me to this honor,” Welsh said. “It’s not something that I expected, for sure, but knowing that it comes from other people and friends, it’s why it’s gratifying.”

Welsh is a member of a number of international industry associations – he often cites the International Fruit Tree Association tours as a great place to “borrow” innovations - and his globetrotting has paid off. He decided to get into growing club varieties such ‘Kiku’ and ‘Kanzi’. True to his nature, Welsh credited his team for the success.

“There are about 520 acres in this area (Quincy, WA) that were developed in this region that I started in 2007, and when I say I, it was not me, it was the company giving me the opportunity to do it, and then hiring some really, really key people that did all the work,” he said. “Thankfully, I

was just able to help them with some teaching, some guidance, some oversight, and some mentoring, and really they've taken it and have done the rest."

Sponsored by Valent USA, the Apple Grower of the Year Award honors individuals who influence the apple industry within the orchard and outside of it. Welsh follows a long line of winners from Washington, beginning with the legendary Grady Auvil. Welsh is the 36th recipient of the honor, and both his achievement and selflessness were noted by Valent USA.

"A hard-working industry leader dedicated to being a team player in the field, Tim Welsh supports his teammates and the industry as a whole and unselfishly gives credit to others, downplaying his accomplishments," says Vince Restucci, Market Segment Manager at Valent U.S.A. "It's obvious why he is held in such high esteem by his peers, and Valent is honored to recognize Tim as this year's Apple Grower of the Year."

David Eddy, the Editor of American Fruit Grower, says it's impressive how Welsh has adapted to the great change in the Washington apple industry, where plenty of older growing operations are getting snapped up by outsiders such as private equity firms with lots of cash.

"It seems to me Welsh has found the formula for success: Be nice to everyone and work your you-know-what off," Eddy says. "He found his calling in the orchards at an early age, and despite promotions to largely desk jobs, he makes a point of getting out in the field."

About

The [American Fruit GrowerSM Apple Grower of the Year Award](#) is presented annually by American Fruit Grower published by Meister Media Worldwide. It honors apple growers who have reached outstanding levels of success through their efforts in innovative production, marketing, horticultural, and management practices.

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