



MEET OUR GROWERS

Rasch Family
Orchards

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

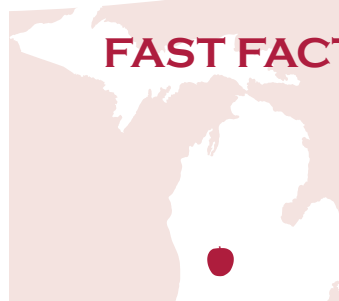
HISTORY

The Rasch family has grown fruit in West Michigan since 1903. Don Rasch and the late Ed Rasch, owners of Rasch Family Orchards, know the importance of that legacy. As fifth-generation growers, they work closely with family in the area to operate farms with an emphasis on growing high-quality fruit.

Don, along with his brother Ed, took over Rasch Family Orchards from their father in 1984, and quickly proved themselves as influential figures in the growing community. Ed passed away in early 2010 but his hard work and vision carries on in the brothers' orchard.

Rasch Family Orchards has been working with Riveridge Produce Marketing for over 20 years, and values their partnership. Don explains, "Working with Riveridge has been great. Everyone has their own farms and they're doing their own thing, but in the end we're all in it together."

FAST FACTS



- Location: *Grand Rapids, Michigan*
- Total Acreage: *500 acres*
- Year Founded: *1903*
- Commodities: *apples, peaches, pears and plums*
- Varieties: *Braeburn, Cortland, Empire, Fuji, Gala, Gingergold, Golden Delicious, Honeycrisp, Ida Red, Jonagold, Jonamac, Jonathan, McIntosh, Paula Red, Red Delicious, and Rome*
- Production Time: *August - May*
- Packing Facility: *Rasch Brothers Apple Storage*
- Distance from Packing Facility: *1-5 miles*



GROWTH

Rasch Family Orchards have grown steadily since Don and Ed took ownership. In addition to 450 acres of apples, they also grow over 50 acres of other fruit including peaches, pears and plums. “We’re always challenging ourselves to expand,” says Don. “Buyers want new fruits and varieties, so we deliver.”

The pair also own Rasch Brothers Apple Storage, located just down the road from the orchards. With their own packing facility, they are able to meet the needs of different clients by providing unique packing and shipping solutions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Along with growing the orchard, Don makes an effort to stay at the forefront of new technology and growing techniques. Advanced sprayers keep chemical use to a minimum to decrease environmental impact, and new, denser planting strategies improve efficiency. “Each orchard has a lifespan,” says Don, “and one of our goals here is to keep them healthy and productive as long as possible.”

Rasch Family Orchards is also GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) certified and uses Integrated Pest Management to control the ecosystem in an orchard without negative impacts.

FUTURE

With the passing of Ed earlier this year, Don works to uphold his family’s and Ed’s legacy. He also looks forward to the future knowing that the next generation is ready to follow in his footsteps. His two sons, Jake and Nicholas, are studying horticulture and agricultural business management. “It’s great to see them really lean into the work,” Don reflects. “It can be a challenge to work with family, sure, but you’re a lot tighter, too.” Rasch Family Orchards will be a strong presence in West Michigan for many years to come.



RIVERIDGE

Riveridge Produce Marketing, Inc.
Sparta, MI | 800.968.8833 | www.riveridgeproduce.com