

# Sweet as a Peach

Harrah orchard features 14,000 peach and nectarine trees

**By Traci Chapman**  
Contributing Writer

Looking for something fun for the whole family to do this summer? How about picking your own luscious peaches and nectarines to take home and enjoy? That's exactly what Wind Drift Orchards offers the community, and has been doing since opening in 1987. Wind Drift East Orchard, located northwest of Harrah, Oklahoma, 19400 NE 63rd, was established by Bill and Jann Spencer. The orchards were designed and laid out to function as a U-Pick operation with a selection of early season, mid season, and late season peach and nectarine varieties suited for the Oklahoma weather conditions and growing season. The variety selection includes a ripening sequence for peaches available from early June through September.

In 2013, under new ownership, but with Bill Spencer still as manager, Wind Drift Orchard expanded to include the West Orchard at 18499 NE 50th Street. The West Orchards functions as a U-Pick orchard as well. Both orchards have been replanted with new, up-dated varieties in a

high-density layout since the new ownership. The orchards are irrigated and cared for to keep trees pruned low for easy picking.

"We planted our first orchard on NE 63rd in 1987. Twenty something years later we tried to retire and didn't quite get the hang of it, so we came back managing it, now under new ownership," explained Spencer. "We have roughly 7,000 trees in each orchard. So between the two of them we have 14,000 peach and nectarine trees. A lot of it is recent planting, in the last 4-5 years, so in other

## Perfect Peach

**WHAT** Wind Drift Orchards

**WHERE** 19400 NE 63rd St., Harrah

**DETAILS** Visitors can pick their own fruit and buy pre-picked or frozen peaches.

**INFO** Visit [winddriftorchards.com](http://winddriftorchards.com)

words this year we're coming into the production with our trees that are 3 years old. The trees are at various stages, so next year we'll be getting very close to all of the trees being at full production."

The West Orchards Customer Service area offers pre-picked peaches and fresh, frozen peaches throughout the season as well for those who don't want to pick their own. The prices are \$2 a pound for U-Pick, \$2.25 a pound for pre-picked and \$6 for fresh, frozen peaches. They accept cash, check or credit cards. The orchards work very closely with the OSU agricultural department to help maintain the current culture for



-Photo by Tonya Little

**Starla Little and Bill Spencer, Wind Drift Orchards owner, at the Harrah orchard.** managing an orchard. Their processing, spray and fertilizer programs all are very closely related to the OSU programs.

"There are 39 different varieties of peaches. The harvest for each variety usually lasts about 10 days, so you can come back and get different kinds. Most people spend about 30 minutes to an hour here picking, we try to make it as efficient as possible. Our people-movers take them from one area to another to pick different kinds of peaches," explained Spencer.

The West orchard has a parking area where the people-movers come to pick you up and take you around to various parts of the orchard. There are several people-movers going at one time, constantly dropping off groups of people in one area and coming back and picking them up to take to another, so that you can get all the varieties that are ripe at that time should you want them. The East orchard is laid out in a more accessible way where you can drive your car right up to the different kinds of trees and pick them, and drive to another area, before ending at the customer service area to pay for them. The staff at the orchards are all helpful and friendly, and encourage everyone to come check them out.

You can find out more information about the Wind Drift Orchards on their website at [Wind-driftorchards.com](http://Wind-driftorchards.com).

