



Crunch time

Costco's baby carrot supplier grows up to be one of the largest carrot producers in the industry

by JULIE KENDRICK

Two brothers, Rod and Bob Grimm, ran a roadside produce stand in the early 1960s in Anaheim, California. As their small business grew, the brothers incorporated and, in 1969, began doing business as Grimmway Farms. They eventually moved operations to Kern County, California, a vegetable-producing region that, according to the University of California Davis, is responsible for more than 80% of the country's carrot harvests each year.

And then—big news in an industry not known for fads—everyone suddenly became interested in tiny carrots. In the 1990s, baby carrots began turning up everywhere from crudité platters to school lunches. Grimmway Farms made acquisitions that established it as the world's largest producer of carrots.

Deep roots

Grimmway Farms has come a long way from those produce

stand beginnings, but its roots are still deep in the California soil. Their team of multi-generational farmers is passionate about what they do and incredibly proud of providing nutritious, vitamin-packed produce to their customers.

"To be a farmer, you have to be an optimist," says Jeff Huckaby, the organization's president and CEO. "I'm proud to be the fourth generation in a line of 'farmer-optimists' in my family, all of whom have dedicated their lives to agriculture. I've always had a passion for this business, but never more so than today. We proudly keep our commitment to the principles planted by our founders,

and we all remain focused on the three P's—people, products and planet—which remain at the heart of our business."

Land caretakers

Sustainability initiatives at Grimmway include drought management, carbon mitigation, soil health, energy conservation, crop rotation and other regenerative farming practices. Some recent examples: In 2020, the organization put 29.5 thousand metric tons (65 million pounds) of carbon into the soil with carrot top green





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waste. Also that year, Grimmway began using reusable plastic containers, saving 590 metric tons (1.3 million pounds) of paper waste and 272 metric tons (600,000 pounds) of paraffin wax waste from going to landfills.

Eric Proffitt, Grimmway's executive vice president of sales and marketing, explains, "We're caretakers of the land that has nourished our growth for more than 50 years." ■

Julie Kendrick is a freelance writer who lives in Minneapolis. Follow her on Twitter @KendrickWorks.



Oven-Roasted Ranch Carrots

80 mL (⅓ cup) olive oil
1 (28-g/1-oz) packet dried ranch seasoning
60 mL (¼ cup) parsley, chopped
15 mL (1 Tbsp) brown sugar
Salt and pepper, to taste
227 g (8 oz) Cal-Organic Baby Carrots

Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F).

In a small bowl, mix the olive oil, ranch seasoning, parsley, brown sugar, salt and pepper until fully combined. Add the carrots; mix evenly. Spread the carrots onto a parchment-lined baking sheet; bake for 25 minutes or until caramelized and tender. Makes 4 servings.

Recipes and recipe images courtesy of Grimmway Carrots



COMPANY INFO

Name

Grimmway Farms

CEO

Jeff Huckaby, president and CEO

Employees

More than 8,000

Headquarters

Bakersfield, California

Website

grimmway.com

Items carried at Costco

Organic and conventionally grown baby carrots and fresh whole carrots

Quote about Costco

"We're proud to be part of the Costco family, which provides its customers with the freshest and most delicious produce."

—Jeff Huckaby, president and CEO

Four-Herb Parisian Carrot Salad

454 g (1 lb) Cal-Organic Baby Carrots
60 mL (¼ cup) fresh dill, chopped
60 mL (¼ cup) fresh oregano, chopped
45 mL (3 Tbsp) lemon juice
30 mL (2 Tbsp) olive oil
15 mL (1 Tbsp) sugar
15 mL (1 Tbsp) fresh thyme, chopped
5 mL (1 tsp) dried tarragon
5 mL (1 tsp) lemon peel
1 head of romaine lettuce



Place carrots in a saucepan of boiling water. Return to boil; cook 5 minutes or until tender-crisp. Drain and rinse the carrots under cold running water. Combine the carrots with all ingredients except lettuce; toss well for 2 minutes to bruise the herbs and bring out the flavour. Cover and chill. To serve, plate the mixture over romaine leaves or toss together in a salad bowl. Makes 4 servings.