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MARKET THYMES

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Blueberries, Borba Farms, Aromas, CA.

The Magic of May at Your Farmers' Market

This month is a magical time to celebrate and enjoy the bounty that is May. Spring is almost over and summer is on its way. The rains were welcomed by farmers and now the results are in - this will be a fantastic summer for fruits and vegetables!

Long-awaited sweet cherries arrive, varieties such as Bings, Rainiers, and Monos; asparagus is still awesome but leaving us in June; and blueberries are a best buy, plump and sweet and waiting for inclusion in your shopping bag.

Farmers' market booths are piled high with greens such as kale, spinach, lettuce, and mixed salad greens; root vegetables like carrots and beets are still here; and strawberries await your recipes.

Fresh fava beans and garden peas are at their peak, both shelled and unshelled, perfect for soups and side dishes.

As we enjoy these May fruits and vegetables, we can anticipate the arrival of summer squash, apricots, and other stone fruit as the season progresses. Stop by and catch the best of May's edible delights.

What's in Season

Arriving This Month:

- Spring onions, spring garlic
- Arugula, spring greens
- Cherries
- Blueberries
- Apricots

Spring produce at the market:

- Asparagus
- Leeks
- Artichokes
- Peas and fava beans
-

Still available year-round:

- Strawberries
- Greens - Kale, spinach, collards, chard, & more
- Asian specialty vegetables
- Potatoes, cabbage, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, winter herbs
- Garlic, onions



Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association

Our Mission: We empower California farmers to be enormously successful in Bay Area communities.

Celebrate May with Cherries!

May is the time for cherries to arrive at your farmers' market. Stop by for a bag of the best cherries around at your local farmers' market where mounds of shiny sweet cherry varieties beckon. Seko Ranch comes to us from Brentwood with several varieties like Burlats, Monos, Bings, and Rainier. Gotelli & Sons have Bings and Rainiers from Lodi, and Iyer Farms also has Bings and Rainiers from Gustine. Each one has a slightly different flavor, but all are fabulous and sweet this time of year. Your farmers' market has more varieties and fresher cherries than anywhere else!

Because of California's mild and mostly dry climate, farmers in the state only grow sweet cherries, as opposed to the tart cherries grown in the Pacific Northwest and in Michigan and New York. Ruby red Bings and red/yellow Rainiers are some of the popular varieties, perfect for lunch boxes, pies, and jams. Though not tart like most baking cherries, these sweet cherries work just as well – and with less need for sugar!



When you bring your cherries home, handle them delicately to avoid bruising. Keep them out of the sunlight to avoid softening and stem damage. Refrigerate as soon as possible. Do not wash before storing. They should be eaten as soon as possible.

California cherries are more than a tasty snack—they're loaded with healthy vitamins and minerals. Cherries are low in calories, contain no fat, and are high in potassium, vitamin C, B complex, and other vitamins and minerals.

Ways with Sweet Cherries

- Pick up several bags of cherries for making sweet cherry jam or pie filling.
- Pit and slice cherries for green salads or fruit salads
- Convert to sauces that add sweet cherry flavor to your meats and poultry.
- Gather a bag for lunch boxes and picnics.
- Make a cherry pie or cobbler

Apricots, Resendiz Farms, Hughson, CA

Blenheim Apricots

Blenheim apricots are one of the many pleasures of early summer. Plump and sweet, with a bit of fuzz to the skin, these golden gems are available through July at your farmers' market. Even with the honey-sweet flavor, the juicy flesh, the rosy yellow skin, and compliments from customers, and other attributes, the Blenheim is slowly disappearing.

It is one of the best tasting, but most delicate of the apricots. With urban growth, cheap competition from Turkey and Africa, and the desire to grow a hardier variety, many farmers are backing away from planting more Blenheims as their old trees die. And since they are a notoriously delicate fruit and do not transport well, most are used for dried apricots these days. That is why we support those farmers at the farmers' market who continue to grow these delicious Blenheims.

Only about 2 percent of apricots grown are of the Blenheim variety with acreage dwindling each year. About 95 percent of the apricots grown in the U.S. come from California. Many different varieties grow in California, each with special characteristics. The most prevalent varieties are the Poppys, Pattersons, Blenheims, Tiltons, and Castlebrites.

There are still many small farmers who insist on keeping this luscious variety of apricot alive. Chefs consider Blenheims the best of the apricots for flavor. Customers find it is a rare and wonderful treat during the summer months.

For people in the know, Blenheims will remain a favorite apricot with intense flavor and lovely color. These apricots will continue to be grown by niche farmers with a desire to see the fruit continue to be available at farmers' markets.

Enjoy these wonderful Blenheim apricots before they disappear. Look for them May through July at your local farmers' market and support those farmers who continue to grow them.





May Recipes

Little Gem Lettuce Salad with Apricots

2 heads Little Gem lettuce, washed and cut into quarters
2 Tokyo turnips, sliced thin with a mandolin
1/4 cup of toasted pepita seeds
2 apricots, sliced into quarters

For the crème fraîche dressing:

3 tablespoon crème fraîche
1 tablespoon minced chives
Juice of 1 small lemon
1/2 tablespoon honey

Whisk all ingredients together, toss with prepared lettuce. Add salt and pepper to taste, serve. *Recipe: PCFMA, Cookin' the Market*

Cherry Salsa

2-1/2 cups pitted sweet cherries, rough chopped
1/4 cup fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon minced garlic
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
2 fresh jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely chopped

In a large bowl, mix everything together. Chill for 30 minutes; garnish with chopped cilantro, if desired, and serve cold or at room temperature. *Recipe: PCFMA Staff.*

Pickled Daikon Radish

2 daikon radishes, thinly sliced in coins with mandolin
1/2 cup cider vinegar
1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon salt
2 rounded tsp sugar
1 teaspoon dried mustard
1 bay leaf
Fresh ginger, chopped
1 carrot, thinly sliced in coins with mandolin
1 watermelon radish, thinly sliced in coins with mandolin

Heat a small saucepan over medium high heat. Add water, vinegar, salt, sugar, and mustard seed, and cook until it begins to simmer and sugar dissolves. Place watermelon radish, daikon, carrot, and onion into an 8-16 ounce canning jar, along with bay leaf and ginger. Pour the simmering liquid over the vegetables. Allow to cool to room temperature before serving. Keep refrigerated up to one month.

Recipe adapted from: Spade & Plow Farm, San Martin, CA.

For more spring recipes visit pcfma.org/eat/recipes.



Lemongrass - Herb with Attitude

Long and thin like grass, this is a very pungent herb has attitude! It is normally used in small amounts because of the strong flavor - you don't need much!

Easy to grow, blades rise from a small bulb into pale green stalks. The entire stalk of the grass can be used. The grass blade can be sliced very fine and added to soups. The bulb can be "bruised" (smashed like you would a garlic clove) and minced for use in a variety of recipes. The light lemon flavor of this grass blends well with garlic, chillies, and cilantro. The herb is frequently used in curry as well as in seafood soups.

Select fresh looking stalks that don't look dry or brittle. Store fresh lemon grass in the refrigerator in a tightly sealed plastic bag for up to 3 weeks. You can also freeze it for about 6 months without flavor loss.

Uses for Lemongrass:

Soup: The most common way of using lemongrass with Thai Coconut Soup or Pho.

Curry: Cooked in with curry spices to make a very tasty sauce.

Vegetables: Cook with a variety of vegetables for lemony flavoring.

