

# PRODUCE NOTES

May 29, 2008

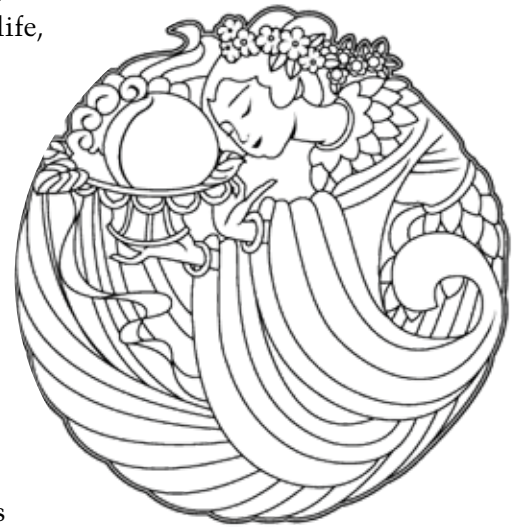


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## Long Live Peaches

Late spring is a uniquely delicious time of year, which heralds the beginning of stone fruit, or drupe, season. Cherries, plums, and apricots are all part of the stone fruit family, along with this pitted wonder: the peach (*Prunus persica*). Peaches have recently begun to arrive in the warehouse here at VV, to the delight of our customers and employees alike. This popular, fuzzy, stone fruit is the second largest commercial fruit crop in the United States, behind only apples. We can expect a good crop this summer, despite a recent frost in Tulare County, according to the California Tree Fruit Agreement Boards; enough cool weather this last winter should result in great flavor and good sizing of California peaches.

Although commercial cultivation began relatively recently in the U.S. (mid nineteenth century), this fruit has quite a rich history, which was first cultivated thousands of years ago in China. As far back as the tenth century B.C., this flocked fruit was known as a favorite of Chinese emperors. The seemingly humble peach has been considered to be a symbol of long life, and even immortality, in Chinese tradition. From China, the peach was brought to Persia; then from Persia, the peach was introduced to Europe during the rule of the Roman Empire; and finally, in the sixteenth century, the peach found its way to America, via the galleons of Spanish explorers. Native Americans helped to bring this wonderful fruit to many regions of this country, including Southern states such as Georgia, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, as well as Colorado, Michigan, and of course, California.



### Peach Facts

Peach trees grow best when planted in rows, north to south.

Thomas Jefferson grew peaches at his plantation, Monticello.

White flesh varieties are most popular in Asia, while yellow flesh varieties are favored in Europe and North America.

The scientific name, *Prunus persica*, is derived from the Latin for "Persian Apple", as Europeans thought that the peach originated in Persia.

Peach trees are cousins of almond trees; they share the same subgenus (*Amygdalus*).

Cultivated peaches are divided into two categories: freestone, and clingstone. As the names imply, freestone varieties' flesh pulls away from the pit inside, whereas clingstone peaches' flesh clings to the single seed. Within these two categories, there are many varieties of white- and yellow-flesh peaches. One of my favorites is the Snow Angel, a white peach. Whether you prefer yours raw, grilled, or baked into a tasty treat, the results will be nothing less than peachy-keen.

-Lorrie Wesa

## Grilled Peaches with Pecorino and Prosciutto

*Servings: Makes 4 (first-course)  
servings.*

### Ingredients:

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 4 firm but ripe large peaches,  
halved, pitted
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil
- 8 very thin slices pecorino  
cheese (each about 2x2 inches,  
shaved with vegetable peeler  
from large wedge)
- 4 thin slices prosciutto, halved  
lengthwise

### Preparation:

Spray grill rack with nonstick spray; prepare barbecue (high heat). Brush peach halves with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill peaches until lightly charred, about 2 minutes per side. Place on large plate, skin side down; top each with cheese slice and drape with prosciutto. Serve immediately.

*Recipe first appeared in Bon  
Appétit Magazine| August 2006  
c/o epicurious.com*

## Seed to Table 101

I remember some of my best subjects in middle school included math, science, and art. But some students at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley, CA might add to that list "Seed to Table 101" as one of their favorite classes...



The Edible Schoolyard is a chance for some lucky sixth- to eighth-grade students to learn the "seed-to-table" experience. Students are responsible for preparing soil, planting seeds, tending, and harvesting many different organically grown crops in their 1-acre garden. In addition, they learn to prepare meals using the produce they grow.

Alice Waters, culinary icon and owner of the world famous restaurant, Chez Panisse, and Neil Smith, principal of King Middle School, conceived this project in 1994. By 1995, the school was able to annex an adjacent asphalt lot, which would become the garden. From the first cover crops of crimson clover, bell beans, and fenugreek, to the many different vines, berries, fruit-trees, greens, roots, and herbs grown today, the Edible Schoolyard has been steadily evolving over the years. Students also learn to compost and nurture the soil, which is important to organic farming. In addition to the 1-acre garden, a fully equipped kitchen classroom adds to the seed-to-table experience.

Hundreds of hands, hearts, and heads have come together to make this program a success. The Edible Schoolyard is supported by many local businesses, who invest their money and time. This program has become a model throughout the country for other school programs. Veritable Vegetable has been a long time supporter of The Edible Schoolyard through the Chez Panisse Foundation. For more information about the Edible Schoolyard, visit their website: [www.edibleschoolyard.org](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org).

-LW

