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Staff Picks

If you have seen a dragon fruit, now is your chance. For a limited time, we are in good supply of these succulent creatures. They look unlike any fruit I have ever seen before! They are oval in shape and have a somewhat flower-like appearance. While there are several varieties of dragon fruits, the ones we carry are pink on the exterior fading into green on the tips of the "petals". The most amazing feature of the fruit is the hot pink-magenta flesh speckled with tiny black seeds. Dragon fruit eats much like a kiwi, with its own unique mild flavor. I highly recommend that you take advantage of this very special offering and get your dragon fruit today! At the very least, they make a great conversation piece.

--Aly Hein, Purchaser

PRODUCE NOTES

September 29, 2008

Market Report for October 2008

As the weather continues to cool statewide, many of the crops we associate with summer are beginning to dwindle. Local cucumbers and zucchini will be around for the next few months in decent supply, but will begin to tail off by the end of October. Local tomatoes will taper off in the next few weeks, with cherry tomatoes and heirlooms becoming scarcer, and bell peppers will remain in excellent supply for about the same time period. At the time of press, broccoli prices increased, and availability tightened up, and bunched spinach continues to be in short supply and expensive due to aphid problems; hopefully this situation will improve in the next few weeks as the weather cools off.

Most fall crops of baby bok choy, bunched greens, brussel sprouts, cabbage, roots, and radishes are beginning to return, while celery, cauliflower, and lettuce hold steady both in price and supply. Meanwhile, corn is almost done for the season, save for a last few boxes of bi-color from our local Fremont grower Joe Perry. Canadian and North West potato prices are coming down, and should stabilize in a few weeks. According to Aly, our winter squash buyer, it's time to stock up on ornamentals, as they are abundant and adorable!

Sadly, blueberries from the North West will shortly be done, with Chilean imports starting by the first week of November. Chilean avocados already landed in L.A., but we will only carry California fruit until the season ends, which should be in approximately four weeks. Local strawberries and raspberries will hang out for another few weeks—get them while they last! Melons from the Capay Valley ended, and supply from the Central Valley—Galia, Honeydew, Orangedew, and Cantaloupe—should last until mid-late October. Black Mission Figs will also be available through October, with the exception of Kadota, Brown Turkey, and Adriatic varieties. Stone fruit from the North West will carry on through October, with white and yellow nectarines, white peaches, and pluots. Also available are yellow peaches from Lancaster, California, yet plums from California are practically done.

New crops abound, with the arrival of dates from Coachella and pomegranates, with Fuyu persimmons expected in two weeks, along with kiwi berries (a.k.a. baby kiwi). New this year, and a blast from the past, is the return of Prairie Farm (now known as Granite Creek) Arizona grown concord grapes. In other grapes, Thompsons, Autumn Royals, and varying red varieties will be around for at least the next month. In addition to the already abundant apple crop, a few more varieties will appear in the form of Gold and Red Delicious, and Pink Ladies; also returning, is "the Cadillac of Pears", the Comice—don't forget to order this smooth fleshed, creamy beauty!



--Denise McAllan, Purchaser

Grower Profile: The Apple Farm

Finally fall has arrived, and with it, a familiar sight in the warehouses of Veritable Vegetable: a vast assortment of apples from The Apple Farm. Nestled in the hills of beautiful Mendocino County, at the bottom of the Navarro River, The Apple Farm is known for their wonderful heirloom apple varieties. The Anderson Valley's early morning fog and warm sunny afternoons are ideal conditions for the 1700 apple (and pear) trees in the 32 acre orchard. Since 1984, The Apple Farm has been family owned; currently, three generations of Bates' and Schmitts work together to operate the farm. For many years, the Bates and Schmitt families practiced organic farming methods, as a member of CCOF. Eventually, the families' passion for their land and fruit led them to make the commitment to practice Biodynamic farming; in 2005, The Apple Farm became Demeter certified.

The Apple Farm grows nearly 90 different varieties of apples, pears and quinces, harvested between late July and late October. All are hand-picked and hand-packed. Many favorites will be available here at Veritable Vegetable, including Philo Gold, Connell Red, Pippin, Gravenstein, Jonathan, Pink Pearl, Sierra Beauty, Splendour, and Wickson. Harvest dates differ depending on variety, and quantities tend to be limited. The Apple Farm's Farm Stand and the San Francisco Ferry Plaza Farmer's Market offer many varieties not available to retail stores and distributors.

The Apple Farm has become much more than just an orchard, offering weekend cooking classes, an internship, guest cottages, as well as opening a storefront in downtown Booneville, The Farmhouse Mercantile. For more information about the Bates and Schmitts' Philo Apple Farm, visit www.philoapplefarm.com.

-Lorrie Wesa

