

PRODUCE PLUS



Market Outlook

JULY 29, 2021

SUMMER PRODUCE AVAILABILITY



Berries- The sunny weather has brought us outstanding, deep red strawberries from the Watsonville area. Although they are not a true farmers market berry (they are cooled before packing in closed clamshells), they have the same great flavor and vibrancy. Strawberries are sold by the 8/1# case or by the clamshell Figs- Black mission figs are available from Central California by the pint and the flat. Local varietal figs have not made it to the market so far this season.

Melons- Varietal melons are currently available from R. Kelley Farms in Sacramento, CA. We are currently offering Twice as Nice, Savor, San Juan, and Ambrosia from Ron, along with a local mixed melon (please specify local). Other varietal melons are available from Central California.

Black seedless watermelon are available from Vierra Farms and yellow doll watermelons are available from Fully Belly.

Pears- Delta Pears are available from Stillwater Orchards in Courtland, CA- an area known to produce some of the best pears in the world. We are currently stocking Bartletts, Red Crimson, and Bosc. **Stone Fruit-** Beautiful yellow and white peaches and nectarines are in from Twin Peaks Orchards. They are available by the single layer flat and by the pound. The goal at Twin Peaks is to pick tree-ripened fruit that will reach a maximum degree of ripeness within 2-3 days after harvest. Please keep this in mind when purchasing. **Pluots and plums** are available from J&J Ramos near Lodi, CA. **Apricots** are no longer local and will be finished shortly.

"Farm to you overnight"

Beans- Summer beans have are in from Dwelley Farms. We are currently offering bluelake green beans, yellow wax beans, and romano beans. Cranberry shelling beans are also available but are limited.

Corn- Local yellow and white corn is available from Dwelley and Vierra Farms. While corn is available year-round, local summer corn usually tastes sweeter with larger, plump kernels.

Eggplant- Listada di Gandia Eggplant, or just Listada, and Rosa Bianca are both specialty Italian heirloom eggplants. Listada are smooth and creamy with a thinner skin than most Italian varieties. Biancas are mild with no bitterness and great for slicing or stuffing. Available from Fully Belly by the 10# case.

Peppers- Locally grown Jimmy Nardellos, a sweet and light pepper, are available from Full Belly. Local Gypsy peppers, a sweet stuffing pepper, are available from Riverdog by the 10# case.

Squash- Many factors have limited the amount of varietal squash in the summer market. Squash is a labor intensive crop that requires a large amount of water and has a small harvesting window. Due to lack of labor and water restrictions, we have limited availability from local sources this season. Farms that we have sourced from in previous years have made the difficult decision to either not grow squash this season or have had to abandon their fields. Summer varietal squashes from California are extremely limited.

Tomatoes- We source locally grown heirlooms from Yeung Farms in West Sacramento. We are currently offering single variety heirloom tomatoes as well as mixed toybox cases. We also pack a "Zinfandel Toybox," a toybox case of mixed variety but uniform size. Heirlooms are sold by the 10#/single layer case only. Also available from Uncle Ray are true vine ripe tomatoes and green tomatoes.

Locally grown mixed medley cherry tomatoes are available from numerous local farms, including Durst, Fully Belly, and Riverdog. Available by the 12 pint flat or the 1/2 flat.

HEIRLOOM TOMATOES

Tomato season is in full swing! Heirloom tomatoes are varietal tomatoes whose seeds have been passed down for generations. The word "heirloom" refers to the history or heritage behind the fruit, with each variety having its own lineage. To qualify as an heirloom variety, the variety must be at least 50 years old and remain breed-true. Heirloom tomatoes exhibit various colors, flavors, textures, and shapes- often times having a less than perfect appearance. They are ripened on the vine and picked ready to eat.

We source locally grown heirlooms from Yeung Farms in West Sacramento. "Uncle Ray" offers over 2 dozen varieties throughout the tomato season. Because heirlooms are more delicate than a traditional tomato, we recommend hand slicing, keeping them at room temperature, and utilizing them within a few days. We currently offer single variety heirloom tomatoes as well as mixed toybox cases. Toybox heirlooms are a mix of varieties, colors, and shapes. We also offer what we refer to as a "Zinfandel Toybox", which is a mixed variety box but all of the tomatoes are uniform in size. Heirlooms are sold by the 10#/single layer case only. We are currently stocking the following:



Red/Purple Varieties:

- Black Prince
- Black Pineapple
- Black Zebra
- Pink Brandywine
- Purple Cherokee
- Striped Cavern



Orange/Yellow Varieties:

- Carolina Gold
- Kellogg's
- Patty's Striped
- Pineapple
- Yellow Brandywine



Green Varieties:

- Great White
- Green Zebra
- Green Shady Lady

Please keep in mind that varieties can differ daily.

TRUE VINE TOMATOES



Summer in Sacramento gives us a multitude of wonderful crops but one of the most highly sought-after items are the True Vine Ripened Tomatoes. Close to 25 years ago, a local chef asked the founder of Produce Express, "Pops" Boyce, to find a consistent source for a vine ripened, large, deep red, slicing tomato. After weeks of searching and experimenting with several growers, Pops finally found a grower in Lodi, CA who would allow the tomatoes to reach full color and flavor on the vine. Pops would drive to Lodi every other day to purchase what would soon be known to chefs all over our region as "true" vine ripe tomatoes. Today, Uncle Ray grows our true vine ripe tomatoes in Yolo County. The true vine ripe tomato was Produce Express' first "locally" grown item brought directly from a farm to the restaurants. It played a key role in the foundation of today's Farm-to-Fork philosophy.

After extensive research, the Shady Lady variety was chosen for its beef steak characteristics. This particular variety is a red round variety, typically the same size as the 5x5 tomato. The true vine ripened tomatoes are given the opportunity to reach full color, maximum sugar, and an ideal level of acidity before harvesting. Their balanced flavor makes them ideal for sandwiches, burgers, salads, and more! The most intriguing aspect of true vines is that they are picked and packed the morning of and delivered to us the same evening. We deliver them to our customers the very next morning. In fact, true vines often arrive at our warehouse with the field heat still in them.

Keep in mind, vine ripened tomatoes are not a traveling tomato; picking tomatoes when fully ripe can have a downside. Although the beautiful red color of a true vine ripe tomato is alluring, the skin and flesh is softer and more delicate than the typical round tomato. Because of their softer nature, we recommend hand slicing rather than using a slicer. True vines also have a shorter shelf life, making the fruit more susceptible to damage. We also recommend keeping them out of refrigeration to maintain optimal texture and vibrancy. We store all of our tomatoes in a temperature controlled room, set at 65°F. True vines are sold by the 20#/2 layer flat only.