

# FRESH NEWS

ANOTHER SERVICE FROM THE MERCHANTS OF SAN FRANCISCO WHOLESALE PRODUCE MARKET

SAN FRANCISCO

SEPTEMBER 8, 2008

## NATIONAL 5 A DAY MONTH

Remember that September is National 5 A Day Month. It is sponsored by the Produce for Better Health Foundation. Contact them at 302-235 ADAY (2229) or on their website at [www.5aday.com](http://www.5aday.com) for artwork, recipes or other info on retail promotions.

## FRUIT

### BANANAS

Great timing for back-to-school promotional pricing. Baby and red bananas may also get some needed attention during this traditional lunch box packing time.

### MANGOS



There are still some large, late season kents available out of Mexico. They represent about the last hurrah, which started back in spring, of Mexican production.

The newcomers are California grown keitt variety of mango. The Coachella Valley is home to this very large (usually) green skinned mango. As the skin never moves much out of green, these need to be sampled or at least cut open, to show customers the bright orange, and ripe, interior flesh. Although pricier, there are excellent fruits and short seasoned. Don't wait on them.

### PEARS

The lineup is still dominated by Sacramento River and Lake County bartlett pears. The creamy comice, the colorful red starkrimson, and the first California bosc pears are also here. This is but the start of a very lo-n-g season.

The California Pear Advisory Board has many great tools to help retailers in this season's pear promotions. Contact them via their website at [www.calpear.com](http://www.calpear.com)

### BERRIES

Not quite as plentiful as a while back, but still enough. Lots of Watsonville strawberries, although this hot weather stresses the berry causing some softness and shortening its shelf life. No major disaster, just check your lots closer. Blackberries have bumped up some, although the ones that have been around have excellent flavor. Raspberries are steady with more production coming for fall. Full pint blueberries are gone with 6 oz and 4.4 oz to be the norm.

### MELONS

Cantaloupes are very good and very reasonable, likewise with honeydew. The honeydew is a definite sample and sell melon. Very good sugar and right on the price. Some of these melons are on the beefy side (four count honeydews and crenshaws-ouch!) Halved melons with the seed cavity filled with berries may move some of these too big melons. They can make a sharp looking display when set on an ice bed. Include all of the varieties in the mix-galia, sharlyn, among others will not be around for much longer. Get them while you can.

### APPLES

New California crop includes Sonoma counties own Gravenstein, along with the red grav, gala and the granny smith. Others will soon follow with the heavyweight, Washington state waiting in the wings.

### LEMONS/LIMES

What a difference eighteen months make! Lemons are coming not only from California's frost damaged orchards but also Mexico and Chile are shipping lemons. Plenty of limes for those end of summer cervezas.

### STONEFRUIT

Yes, there is still some northwest fruit around, mainly the Elegant Lady peach. But the summer hey day of stonefruit is quickly fading. And as always with late season fruit, remind your customers to eat this on the firm side because sometimes they get mushy before they get that mid-summer juiciness.

### GRAPES



The thompson variety is still the dominant green seedless grape. On the other hand, the red flame seedless is diminishing in supply. In comes the sunset seedless, the ruby the crimson to take the red spot on the grape display. Look also for grapes with seeds. The kyoho comes in a handy clamshell for ease to the retailer as well as the customer.

### AVOCADOS

The late California season is seeing prices creeping higher. The true start of Chile is still a ways away. Until then, we will still be looking at stiff avo prices. On the flip side is very tasty California fruit. All of that late season avocado oil.

### QUINCE?

Yes, next we'll see gourds, hay bales and pumpkins. And even a for-real, regular season football.

### ORGANICS / SPECIALTY

There is a good supply of big, beefy, but creamy textures organic mangoes out of Mexico, some of the last. With the heat of late summer and fall, look for deeply colored red bell peppers. Organic figs, both mission and kadota are in full second season swing. Late summer brings us a large selection of organic specialty peppers along with cucumbers and eggplant. As always with late summer, look for small scale local organic apples and pears.

National Organic Harvest Month is September. Sponsored by the Organic Trade Association this is a perfect time to highlight an ever increasing section of the produce (and other goods) department. Contact them at 413-774-7511 for more information. Or log onto [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com).



### VEGETABLES

#### TOMATOES



The splashiest action is in the area of specialty or varietal tomatoes. Once the sole domain of organic growers, this is an ever expanding market, with smaller conventional growers joining the action. On the beefy side there is the Brandywine, a 150 year old variety from the Amish folks in Pennsylvania, which some consider to be the BEST tasting tomato available. The staggeringly colorful Marvel Stripe also weighs in on the big size. Tomatoes with names like Black Krim, Cherokee Purple or Black crimson are bolder tasting fruits, with eye-catching hues to their interiors. A great way to expose more customers to these different tomatoes is by the "Mixed Heirloom" route, whereby a small selection of varieties is offered in one box. Cherry tomatoes, yellow, gold, green and red in various shapes can also be had. Prices are a bit stiffer, but the flavor is outstanding. Actively sampling these juicy, memorable tasting tomatoes will put smiles on customers faces and \$\$ in the cash register. These vines have been pushing out a steady stream of tomatoes since mid-summer. Don't let the late season pass you by.

Written by Mark Ferro

 Continued on Back 



For the latest happening in the tomato world, log onto the California Tomato Commission's website at [www.tomato.org](http://www.tomato.org).

#### HERBS

If displaying bulk herbs, present them like cut flowers - with their stems in water. Colorful attractive clamshell packs are preferred by some customers. In any case, supplying shoppers with storage tips, usage and serving information is useful to herb buyers.

#### CHILES

The late summer heat brings on an abundance of mild to hot chile peppers. Some markets are more successful than others with these, but they are worth a look. The thirty pound boxes in the marketplace are a hint that there are plenty. Play mix and match and always have an informational piece describing the heat qualities of each.

#### ASPARAGUS

Still an in-between time for asparagus. Mexico is the primary source although Peru is in the mix with much more to follow. Qualities have been OK, but check your lots.

#### BEANS

A decent supply of blue lakes at varying price levels. Varietal beans like romano, yellow wax and French beans are also available. Get on these while you can because being a local bean, production will wane as the days get shorter and the nights get cooler, the plants will begin to tire.

What's the difference between a fruit and a vegetable? Botanically, a fruit is the part of the plant surrounding the seed(s). Tomatoes, eggplant, and avocados are botanically considered fruits although we use them as vegetables.

#### CUCUMBERS

Surprisingly for late summer, still on the stiff side. Overall, there has just been less production for the level of demand.

#### PEPPERS



A rainbow of affordable colors - green, red and yellow is available. Our local Stockton and Gilroy supply is in full swing. The heat of late summer and early fall brings out the deepest red, almost black color in the red bells.

#### CABBAGE

How about some home made coleslaw? It is very easy and with both red and green cabbage being in the affordable range, it is a budget stretcher. Even the usual spread between red and green cabbage is not what it usually is.

#### SQUASH

Still more than enough to go around, both with regular zucchini and crookneck along with varietal squashes. There is some especially sharp looking crookneck around. As fall approaches our local squash supply gets shorter, so enjoy it while it is here.

#### BROCCOLI

Prices have been quite reasonable lately, both with bunches and crowns.

#### CORN



Labor Day begins the end of the bang-bang action of summer when it comes to corn. Brentwood is in lighter supplies and yellow is shorter altogether. But between Brentwood, Mendota and other areas, there is still enough to be had.

#### LETTUCE

Romaine and green leaf have fallen considerably from unseasonably lofty heights. This time of year iceberg can be had on the cheap.

#### ABOUT THE WRITER

Mark Ferro is an active produce professional who not only writes a weekly newspaper column, but also co-hosts an hour-long radio show about fresh fruits and vegetables. As part of the "Produce Pair" he can be heard Saturdays at noon (PST) on the Talk America Radio Network on over 60 stations coast to coast., including Yada Yada Radio 1550AM here in the Bay Area or listen on the Internet at [www.producepair.com](http://www.producepair.com).

Desktop Publishing  
by [NateMcCarty@msn.com](mailto:NateMcCarty@msn.com)

AUTAMATAUN PRODUCE  
BAY AREA ORGANIC EXPRESS  
BERTI PRODUCE  
BOB'S PRODUCE  
COOKS COMPANY  
COOSEMANS SAN FRANCISCO  
DANVILLE PRODUCE  
JOHN DEMARTINI COMPANY  
EARL'S ORGANIC PRODUCE  
FIVE HARVEST COMPANY

FREDDY'S FINEST PRODUCE  
FRESH GREEN INC.  
GEARY WHOLESALE, INC.  
GREENLEAF PRODUCE  
JACOBS MALCOLM & BURTT  
O. LIPPI & COMPANY  
MAFFEI PRODUCE  
MERCADO LATINO INC.  
NEW CITY FRUIT & PRODUCE  
NORTH BAY PRODUCE

OCEAN PARADISE PRODUCE  
PARKVIEW PRODUCE  
QUALITY FRESH PRODUCE  
STANLEY PRODUCE  
STC DISTRIBUTING  
UNIVERSE COMPANY, LLC.  
VEGIWORKS, INC.  
WASHINGTON VEGETABLE  
WHAT A TOMATO  
YUET CHEONG PRODUCE