

What's in Season from the Garden State

Bi-weekly Highlights from Rutgers Cooperative Extension

June 19, 2006



Harvest History Detectives: Eye on the Jersey Peach

Only remnants of New Jersey's colonial history remain in our modern commercial landscape, but New Jersey peach production is a part of that heritage. Peach growing began in New Jersey in the early 1600's when colonists began importing varieties from Europe. New Jersey was well suited to the growing of peaches because of its good climate and soils. Peaches were described as "so scarce in Europe that they were reserved for the very rich, but in New Jersey, so abundant that those falling to the ground were just left there." (*New Jersey Farm Bureau*). Peaches were the first fruit to receive attention commercially and in 1683 "were available in New York by the wagonloads from New Jersey orchards."

Today, New Jersey's peach farmers produce about 60 million pounds of peaches on 8,000 acres, making the state the fourth-largest producer of peaches in the nation. Gloucester County leads the state in peach production. Jerome Frecon, Agricultural Agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County says, "Peach harvest begins on June 25 in South Jersey and continues through mid-September in North Jersey. New Jersey growers continue to diversify plantings with newer and tastier varieties of both yellow-fleshed peaches and nectarines, as well as more white-fleshed peaches and nectarines. A limited supply of flat white-fleshed or "doughnut" peaches will be available in late

July and early August. Peach size is excellent with abundant rainfall in the past weeks."

This week's 5-a-Day the Color Way using the current Jersey Fresh availability:
 Breakfast: peach slices with vanilla yogurt;
 Lunch: Jersey Fresh dill potato salad;
 Dinner: salad of baby greens, with slices of purple onion, cabbage or look for purple peppers at your farm market! Dessert: Sugarbaby watermelon

Out of the Orchard into the Bottle: Peach Cider

Santo Maccherone of Circle M Farms, a third generation peach grower from Gloucester County picks his peaches so close to freshly ripened, that a lot of the peaches are too fragile for shipping. Tired of wasting his tastiest fruit, he decided he needed a way to capture that ripeness. He contacted the Rutgers Food Innovation Center and a new product was born: Peach Cider. Truly the essence of a ripe peach, this drink can be found at local farmstands throughout the state, Wegmans, and some Stop and Shop stores will be carrying it soon.



Available in 16 oz. and 64 oz. sizes

New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Jersey Fresh Availability Report

Current:			Forecast (start date):
Arugula and Cilantro	Dill & Parsley	Peppers	Winter squashes: acorn,
Baby Arugula & Baby Spinach	Cucumbers	Radishes	spaghetti - late July
Basil	Eggplant	Snap beans	Butternut
Beets	Greens: collards, kale, Kholrabi,	Squash: yellow & zucchini	squash -
Blueberries	mustard & Swiss Chard	Sweet corn	August
Cabbage	Leeks & Green Onions	Tomatoes	
Cantalopes	Nectarines	Turnips	
	Peaches	White Potatoes	



Where to find Jersey Fresh? Ask for it where you shop or dine or go to <http://www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov>



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