

# Produce Notes

May 29, 2020

Veritable Vegetable

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## Eggplant: A Summertime Essential

Eggplant is a plant species of the nightshade family Solanaceae. Eggplant is typically used as a vegetable in cooking, but is technically a berry by botanical definition! As part of the genus Solanum, it is related to tomato and potato. Eggplant skin and seeds can be eaten, like the tomato. It absorbs oils and flavors very well and is great to use in cooking.

It's believed eggplants originated in India, where it continues to grow wild. It has been cultivated in southern and eastern Asia since prehistory. Eggplant was introduced to the United States by Thomas Jefferson, who brought seeds from Europe. He avidly supported farmers and shared seeds and cuttings.



Globe eggplant is the most common and biggest variety. It is large and tear-drop shaped with deep purple coloring. Their big, meaty texture makes them perfect for slicing, grilling, or even roasting whole! California-grown eggplant is bursting into season, so make sure to add some to your order today!

## Spotlight: Merchandising with New Moon Natural Foods

New Moon Natural Foods is a small store with locations in Truckee and Tahoe City, California. Tammy Graham, Produce Manager and Buyer, has been at New Moon Natural Foods for 14 years. She is a pro at building eye-catching gorgeous displays. Even if you don't have a lot of space, there are many ways to bring life into your store, push sales, and move a lot of volume. Here are some tips from Tammy on merchandising in small spaces:

- **Planning:** Talk to your Account Manager about products that are coming into season or tasting exceptionally great. Think of the floor space that is available and align your purchases with build outs. When half or full pallets of products are ordered, 3-5 days of planning is typically needed.
- **Selecting Products:** Pick new and seasonal items to feature in beautiful, abundant displays. Great items for large summer displays include tomatoes, basil, mangoes, melons, stone fruit, papaya, berries and cherries. It's important to consider which items move quickly, what are current weather conditions in your area, and if a holiday is coming up. If items are not common, consider educational signage for customers.
- **Increasing Sales:** In a small or medium store, it's important to be creative with the limited space. Utilize outside space in warmer months. It's a great way to have your customers selecting items for purchase before they even walk into the store. Case stacks works well in outdoor spaces and can be easily restocked. Witty signage and engaging with customers on the floor are other great ways to boost sales.



- **Cross Merchandise:** Pair simple recipes with displays. Shoppers are looking for meal ideas every day. Create displays that have all the ingredients to a recipe that is nutritious, easy to prepare, and budget friendly.
- **Engage Your Staff:** Communicate with managers and buyers when you know promotional deals are available. A great way to build excitement is to brainstorm with staff on how to merchandise seasonal products. Try keeping a whiteboard in the produce prep area with information on how to maintain built displays or with talking points.

## New & Exciting!

**Basil**  
California grown in steady supply.



**Graffiti Eggplant**  
Just beginning to start with small numbers out of Mexico. Small and teardrop shaped. Outer skin is shiny, thin, and smooth. Beautiful coloring, striped with violet and ivory white. Inner flesh is cream colored with small, edible seeds.

**Grape** ★  
California grown red seedless grapes in steady supply. Firm, crisp, and sweet with a mild neutral flavor. Mexican black seedless grape in good supply. Juicy, sweet, with a grapey muscat flavor.



**Melon** ★  
California grown Galia and Hami melons in good supply. Galia melon has a yellow to orange skin that is covered in light golden-tan netting. Flesh is pale green with succulent texture with a sweet flavor and tropical aromatics. Hami melon has an oblong shape with golden yellow, lightly netted skin, and are quite hard. Inner flesh is a pale, coral color. Flesh is crisp, juicy, and refreshingly sweet with a floral and sweet aroma.

**Premier Star Apple** ★  
Grown in New Zealand. Show-stopping, bright red blush coloring. Round shape with firm skin. Sweet flavor with a hint of tanginess.

**Zucchini** ★  
California grown is in very strong supply. Prices are softening.



**Yellow Squash** ★  
California grown Gold Bars and Crookneck in good supply. Gold Bar squash is a long, slim summer variety with thin golden yellow skin. Interior flesh is creamy white with a firm and succulent texture and moist seed cavity. Flavor is nutty and subtly sweet. Crookneck squash has a curved slim neck and a widened base with thin yellow skin. Flesh is dense, pale yellow, and has soft, edible seeds. Flavor is mild, buttery, with hints of black pepper and nuts.

## Promotable

**Apricot** ★  
In great supply and tasting great.

**Bagged Apples** ★  
Fuji and Pink Lady 1-pound bags from Cuyama Orchards are in great supply. Great item to carry in stores and for produce boxes.

**Berry**  
Californian blueberries and strawberries in very strong supply.



**Brussels Sprouts** ★  
Mexican in strong supply.



**Coral Cherry** ★  
In excellent supply. Glossy red flesh with low acid and a great sweet flavor.

**Corn**  
California grown bi-color is in great supply. Very strong supply and availability is expected to start in June.

**Green Bean** ★  
California-grown. In excellent supply and looking sharp from our exclusive grower Rundle Family Farms.

### did you know...

...green beans contain nutrients that help prevent diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer?

**Nopales**  
In good supply and sharp pricing. Large and flat sizing. Bright green coloring when fresh that fades to a muted olive green when cooked. Texture is slightly gelatinous with a tender crunch.

## Limited

**Asparagus**  
Somewhat limited in supply with high prices. Higher temperatures in growing regions are expected to end the season soon.

**Broccoli**  
Limited in supply. Demands have outpaced production. Prices are expected to rise. Baby broccoli is also limited in supply but expected to improve by the first week of June.



**Cara Cara Orange** ★  
Tastes amazing and peaking in flavor right now! Extremely sweet flesh, low acid, and seedless. Excellent source of vitamin C, dietary fiber, and anticarcinogens. Winding down fast, so add them to your order today!

**Cauliflower**  
Tight in supply.

**Celery**  
Limited in supply as Mexico production winds down. California production is still in early stages. Supply is expected to improve by mid-June.

**English Hothouse Cucumber**  
Very limited in supply with possible gaps.

**Ginger**  
Remains very limited in supply due to high demands.

**Little Gem Lettuce** ★  
Strong quality and winding down soon. Crisp and sweet. From Blue Heron Farms in Corralitos, California. Add some to your order today before they're done for the season!

**Napa Cabbage**  
Extremely limited in supply.

**Tomato**  
Roma and cherry tomatoes in limited supply with increasing prices.

### done for the season

- Delicata Squash

★ Staff Picks

Tasting Great

Merchandising Corner

What's Fresh?



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