

LOCAL CHARACTER



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The world truly has become a smaller place. And nowhere is that more true than on the aisles of the Fruit Center Marketplace.

Food from nearly all parts of the globe is readily found throughout the Fruit Center's stores in Milton and Hingham. Pasta from Italy, cheese from Australia, wine from Chile, noodles from Asia. Even in the bone-chilling months of winter, tropical fruits are abundant. The culinary variety of the world is but a container ship or cargo plane away.

Easily accessing our global village for our food provisions is an amazing accomplishment. But, as wonderful as this access to our world's cuisine has become, there has recently been a focus on – and a growing appreciation of – the agricultural riches of our local environment. "Eating Local" has become a mission for many folks who are environmentally conscious as well as those who wish to empower their local community. The Fruit Center is inspired by those same ideals. In fact, the Fruit Center's produce buyers are always on the lookout for locally grown produce. If the quality is excellent, locally grown produce is always the buyer's first choice.

Seeking out locally grown produce has a multitude of benefits, not least of which are maintaining your personal health and sustaining a fresh-foods lifestyle. Here are some of the other benefits realized from buying locally grown produce:

Fresher produce – Since most of the local farms the Fruit Center buys from are less than 200 miles from our stores, the items arrive shortly after being harvested (usually within 48 hours), so there's far less time from "farm to table".



When compared to produce harvested in California or other far-off locations, local produce is “thousands of miles fresher”.

Energy conservation and environmental protection – The environmental impact from buying local is significant. Local produce is not traveling great distances, thereby saving fuel and emitting less carbon pollution. Also, local farmers have a personal connection to their land and make every effort to treat their land and surrounding environment responsibly.

Support of local farms, families and economy – Many of the farms the Fruit Center does business with are family owned and operated. According to the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture more than 80% of Massachusetts farms are family-owned. Some have been owned by the same family for several generations. For these families, farming is not just a business – it’s deeply engrained in the fabric of their character, and it shows in the care they take to grow great produce and protect the environment. It also keeps our local economy strong and thriving. In 2004, Massachusetts agricultural exports totaled \$167 million and supported 3,000 jobs.

Smaller farms, more variety, huge benefits – Believe it or not, farms in New England cultivate more than just apples and pumpkins. These small local farms grow a surprisingly wide range of crops. This diversification translates to healthier crops and a healthier environment. This is the polar opposite of corporate farming, which typically focuses on a single variety of a single crop, which can lead to any number of misfortunes during growing and harvesting.

As wonderful as our small slice of the world is here on the South Shore, the opportunity to enjoy seasonal, locally-grown produce is unfortunately fleeting. That being said, from May through October there is an abundance of locally-grown options in the produce department of the Fruit Center. As previously mentioned, the variety of locally grown produce is amazing: cooking greens, carrots, radishes, peppers, tomatoes, corn, and squash, are but some of the fresh choices to be found.

As you shop the aisles of the Fruit Center looking for local produce, have a sense of adventure and be open to experimenting with the variety of items available. As long as nature and weather conditions cooperate, many of your favorites should be easily found, but don’t be afraid to “think outside the box” and try an item that you may not be familiar with. The staff at the Fruit Center can offer recommendations and suggestions on how to prepare many varieties of produce.



'We've got a thing for the locals!'

The Fruit Center's local flair doesn't stop on the produce aisles. Here are some fantastic

local companies – from Boston on south

– that fill the shelves of the Fruit Center:

- Alfredo Aiello (Quincy)
- Baking With Joy (Weymouth)
- Brian's Bakery (Braintree)
- Cal's Baked Goods (Hingham)
- Dancing Deer (Boston)
- Fancypants Bakery (East Walpole)
- Fratellis Bakery (Quincy)
- G.H. Bent Co. (Milton)
- Giovanna Gelato (Newton)
- Great Hill Dairy (Marion)
- Greg's Cinnamon Bread (Weymouth)
- Herrell's Hot Fudge Sauce (Boston)
- Hornstra Farms (Hingham)
- Iggy's Bread (Cambridge)
- Jim's Organic Coffee (West Wareham)
- Konditor Meister (Braintree)
- La Paloma Salsa (Quincy)
- Laurel Hill Foods (Attleboro)
- Mt. Vikos (Marshfield)
- My Mom's Meatballs (Osterville)
- Nona's Homemade Ice Cream (Hingham)
- Olivia's Organics (Boston)
- Phillips Candy House (Dorchester)
- Puopolo Candies (Hingham)
- Redeye Roasters (Hingham)
- Sabra (Norwood)
- Shoe City Pizza (Brockton)
- Shy Brothers Farm (Westport Point)
- Thatcher Farms (Milton)



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