

Gardeners' Market

Several times this summer, I have enjoyed going to the local gardeners market, located at Pioneer Park in Logan, where almost the entire market is completely under the canopy of mature shade trees. I especially like browsing all of the different booths. The atmosphere is very relaxed and is somewhat reminiscent of an old time country fair. One can purchase fresh squeezed lemonade from one booth, while eating newly cooked pastries or even breakfast burritos from another. Vendors have everything from eggs to fruits and vegetables to homemade clothing and crafts to decorate the home. Some vendors also sell fresh bouquets comprised solely of flowers grown right here in the Cache Valley. Local non-profit organizations and government entities also regularly participate and distribute useful information on topics as diverse as water conservation in the landscape to food preservation. Many local restaurants and bakeries also have delicious food ready for purchase. In fact, I will purposely not eat breakfast before attending the market just so that I can find some of the scrumptious and unique foods there and eat them. Many fresh made pastries and breads can be found from market vendors that would be very difficult to find elsewhere. At last count, nearly 100 vendors participate on a weekly basis and the numbers keep increasing on an annual basis.

However, I want to focus on the increased amount of locally grown produce that is becoming available at the market. Fruits such as apricots, cherries, raspberries and blackberries and vegetables such as beets, garlic, squash and several types of leafy greens are already obtainable. Within the next few weeks, peppers, melons, squash, corn, tomatoes, potatoes and others will also be ready. This produce is usually harvested within 24 hours of being brought to the market. Local vendors also have a much wider selection of types of vegetables for sale than is commonly found in traditional stores. For example, some vendors carry several tomato varieties that potentially have better flavor and taste, which also may be more suitable for homemade foods such as salsa, sauces and sandwiches.

If you are looking for other less common vegetables, the gardeners' market is a great place to go. Many vendors are more adventurous in what they grow and are willing to take some risks with lesser known things. They can also usually give instructions for preparation and cooking.

Another advantage to using local produce is the fact that it is actually local. Area growers not only are able to have a fresher, potentially better tasting and more nutritious product, but fewer resources are used in transportation as compared to produce in stores that often come from out of state. With current oil prices, this is an added benefit. Many times local vendors have raised produce right in their backyard and have had the entire family involved. If you are interested in being a vendor at the gardeners' market, go to the following website for contact information:

<http://www.saabra.org/pages/GM.htm>. It is relatively inexpensive and easy to do.