

Local Fruit and Vegetable Availability along the Wasatch Front



Introduction

The Wasatch Front is the urban corridor in Utah extending from Brigham City to Payson along the Wasatch Mountain Range. Roughly 80% of Utah's population lives in this region. Strong community support and consumer demand for fresh and organic local produce has resulted in an increased number of small urban farms over the last 10 years. Freshness is a primary reason consumers seek local produce in addition to other social, economic, and environmental benefits (Brain, 2012). Fruits and vegetables have the highest nutritional content when harvested closer to maturity and stored for minimal time before consuming (Barratt, 2007).

Utah Climate and Production

Freezing winter temperatures make year round production of most crops impossible. Cool season vegetables are typically grown from March through November depending on early snow fall. Warm season vegetables are grown from early May through the first fall frost which generally occurs in mid-October. A wide array of tree fruits and small fruits can be grown in Utah. The main limiting factor for fruit is late spring frost events that injure the blossoms of early flowering trees. Late freeze events occur irregularly year to year.

Greenhouse and high tunnel (unheated) grown produce is increasingly available and it affords farmers an extended market season and higher quality produce. The table on page 2 describes the availability of local fruits and vegetables assuming some growers are utilizing greenhouses and high tunnels to achieve early and extended production.

Where to Find Local Produce

Direct sources of local produce include road side farm stands, farmers markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs. Locally grown fruits and vegetables are also available seasonally in some grocery stores and local restaurants. Many farmers markets now accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to ensure access to low income families. A list of local farms, roadside stands and farmers markets may be obtained through some county Extension offices and on www.utahsown.org.

Vege	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
spinach			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
rhubarb					x	x	x	x				
summer squash						x	x	x	x			
winter squash								x	x	x	x	
salad lettuce						x	x	x	x	x		
sweet corn							x	x	x	x		
tomatoes							x	x	x	x		
watermelons							x	x	x	x		

Fruit	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
apples								x	x	x	x	
apricots						x	x					
asian pears								x	x	x	x	
blackberries							x	x				
sweet cherries						x	x					
tart cherries							x	x				
currants						x	x					
gooseberries							x	x				
grapes								x	x	x		
nectarines							x	x	x			
peaches							x	x	x	x		
pears							x	x	x	x		
plums							x	x	x	x		
raspberries							x	x	x	x		
strawberries					x	x	x					

Utah State University Extension
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Authors

Britney Hunter, Shawn Olsen, Dan Drost, Brent Black, and Jaydee Gunnell