

Perpignan peaches protected by pines

Nectarines and peaches are just coming into season in the Mediterranean, and we're delighted to be able to offer Laurent Ey and his brother Jacques' crops this year.

Laurent has an orchard at the foot of the Pyrenees, near Perpignan. The mountains make an impressive backdrop to their farm. The farm is surrounded by lines of tall pine trees, which makes it even more striking. They're not just there to look pretty though.

Back in the mid nineteenth century, ferocious winds coming in off the sea were causing problems for the west of France. Large parts of the Atlantic Coast were beginning to turn to desert. Napoleon III ordered the planting of the largest forest in Europe, the Forêt des Landes, to stop the sands covering all of central France. While Laurent hasn't planted on quite the same scale, keeping wind damage to a minimum definitely helps protect the quality of his fruits.

Another way plants can indirectly help to keep Laurent's peaches healthy is by trapping moisture in the soil. Laurent leaves the grass and other plants that grow between the trees, because if they were removed, the bare earth would quickly dry out. It can be tricky to judge how much to leave there though. Peach trees don't send their roots very far down into the soil – they spread out to the side instead. That means even the little roots that the grass lays down can compete with the trees. Laurent keeps a nurturing eye on it though, and his crops have been thriving!

Herb extras

From next week there will be an improvement in the way we deliver cut herbs. Your herbs will be picked and punnetted for you on Simon Weir's farm in the New Forest straight out of the field, which should mean you'll end up with more of the best bits and less stalk. The herbs will keep better in these punnets too!

The new punnetted herbs will contain 30g each, so they're a bit bigger than the old 25g packs. They'll be priced at £1.45 for 30g - but we're confident the improvements you'll find in quality will more than make up for this increase in price.

A little apology

Because our farmers don't spray their crops it's inevitable that one or two insects will get amongst the leaves. You may notice some tiny, harmless holes in your basil leaves (caused by a small beetle), but despite the fact that it makes some of the leaves reminiscent of an Edam the holes won't affect the taste or longevity of the basil. Unfortunately some aphids have also got into the lettuces at Sunnyfields. We pick out the ones with insects on, but if there are a few on your lettuce, wash it in water and vinegar to get them all off.

Thin skins

We're getting our first new crop onions this week. As they're young they have very thin, pale skins quite unlike the thick orange skins that develop on onions as they get older.

Bite-size nutrition

Terrifically tart & sometimes sweet gooseberries are a marvellously juicy source of vitamin A, vitamin C & dietary fibre. Cooking is often necessary with the early, green yield. Don't overcook them or you'll lose those vitamins!

Variety is the spice of life

Keitt's mangos are not as red as many other varieties, but they are definitely one of the sweetest and least fibrous mangos out there. They make a great addition to smoothies and salads, or a snack in itself.

Fresh tips

Peaches bruise easily so handle carefully and store in the fridge to prevent over ripening. Place near to other fruits at room temperature if they need softening up.

Summer wine case

Our summer wine case is full of the best of our wines, red, white and rosé. It's a great introduction to organic wine, and an easy way to stock up your wine rack for less. Each of our wines is labelled with its characteristics and some suggestions for the best way to enjoy it. See our website for more details of this case and our entire wine range!



ABEL & COLE



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This Week's Boxes

Deluxe Veg

Beetroot Bunch
Broad Beans
Broccoli
Cherry Tomatoes
Coriander
Courgettes
Green Pointed Cabbage
Little Gem Lettuce
Portobello Mushrooms

Small Deluxe

Veg

Beetroot Bunch
Broad Beans
Broccoli
Cherry Tomatoes
Courgettes
Little Gem Lettuce
Portobello Mushrooms
Red Onion

Essential Veg

Broad Beans
Carrots
Cherry Tomatoes
Fennel
Green Lettuce
Green Pointed Cabbage
Mushrooms
White Onions

Small Mixed Box

Broccoli
Cherry Tomatoes
Little Gem Lettuce
White Onions
New Potatoes
Mango
Oranges
Pears

Family Box

Broad Beans
Broccoli
Carrots
Courgettes
Fennel
Green Lettuce
Green Pointed Cabbage
Tomatoes
White Onions
New Potatoes
Fairtrade Bananas
Oranges
Mango
Nectarines

Basics Box

Potatoes, carrots, onions, bananas and: Apples
Cucumber, Green Lettuce
Mushrooms, Tomatoes

Mixed Box

Carrots
Courgettes
Little Gem Lettuce
Mushrooms
Pak Choi
White Onions
New Potatoes
Fairtrade Bananas
Mango
Oranges

Farmer's Choice Combi Box

Broad Beans
Courgettes
White Onions
Fairtrade Bananas
Pears

Farmer's Choice

Vegetable Box

Broad Beans
Cherry Tomatoes
Courgettes
Mushrooms
White Onions

Seasonal Salad Box

Basil
Bean sprouts
Carrots
Cherry Tomatoes
Cucumber
Green Lettuce
Little Gem Lettuce

Essential Fruit

Apples
Fairtrade Bananas
Gooseberries
Mango
Strawberries

Essential Fruit Plus

Kiwi Fruit, Oranges
Redcurrants, *no*
Gooseberries

Baby Box

Avocado
Broccoli
Carrots
Courgettes
Mango
Peaches
Pears

We occasionally have to make replacements at the last minute. If your box doesn't match the contents shown here, please count the items in the box, as replacement may have been made. Thank you!

DINNER IN 30!

Here's a quick concoction, for 4, using delicious **green pointed cabbage**. On medium-high heat sauté a chopped onion in a little oil until it just starts to colour. Throw in a few minced garlic cloves; cook for 1 minute. Pour in a few glugs of white wine and reduce for 2 minutes; add 1 chopped cabbage and a few glugs of chicken stock. Cover and wilt the cabbage until it's soft but not soggy. Add a couple of handfuls of cooked white beans; reduce for a few minutes, swill in some cream, and serve in bowls with lots of bread for mopping up!

SPICED NECTARINE CAKE

This can also be made with peaches or apricots!

150g **unsalted butter**, room temperature
100g + 3 tablespoons **sugar**
2 **eggs**, 1 tablespoon **fresh lemon juice**
1 1/2 teaspoons **grated lemon peel**
125g + self-raising **flour**
3 medium **nectarines**, halved and thinly sliced
3/4 teaspoon **ground cinnamon**

Preheat oven to 180C, 350F, gas 4. Butter a 9-inch **springform pan**. With a whisk or electric mixer, beat butter in a large bowl until fluffy. Add 100g sugar and beat until blended. Beat in eggs 1 at a time, then lemon juice and peel. Beat in flour until smooth. Spread batter evenly in the buttered pan. Arrange nectarine slices on top of the batter in concentric circles to cover the cake completely; press in a bit to adhere. Mix cinnamon and remaining sugar in a small bowl; sprinkle over cake. Bake until golden and tester comes out clean, about 1 hour. Cut around cake to loosen; remove pan sides. Serve slightly warm or at room temperature with cream.

MUSHROOM CAESAR SALAD

A side, starter or main; try it topped with sliced cooked chicken, grilled Portobello mushrooms or salmon, and served with crusty bread and butter for 4.

2 tablespoons **fresh lemon juice**
4 **anchovy fillets**, 2 medium **garlic cloves**
2 teaspoons each **Dijon** and **horseradish** sauce
1 teaspoon **Worcestershire sauce**
180ml **olive oil**
250g **mushrooms**, thinly sliced
4 large handfuls of **lettuce**, torn into bite-size pieces
2 handfuls **croutons**
1 handful **grated Parmesan cheese**

Blend first 6 ingredients together in a processor until almost smooth; slowly add oil and blend until well emulsified. Toss mushrooms with 1/2 the dressing in a bowl; marinate 15 minutes. Toss dry ingredients together in a large bowl; add mushrooms and toss with enough dressing, salt, and pepper to taste.

YOUR RECEIPT