



PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION

BERRY BERRY GOOD!



Naturally sweet strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, and red and golden raspberries are abundant during the summer months. Whether you enjoy them in fruit salads, desserts, smoothies, or just eaten in hand, they are delicious! With their hefty nutritional value and sweet taste you can't lose.

Purchasing them from your local farmers' market ensures you are getting the best just-picked flavor. They are harvested at their peak of ripeness, rather than picked under-ripe to ship from outlying sources. Ever noticed when you buy strawberries at the grocery store they're still hard and white inside? These have been picked too early and have not been allowed to ripen on the vine to develop their lovely sweet flavor. The natural sugars are added towards the end of a berry's ripening so the later you pick them the sweeter the berries. The same can be said for other berries. All berries are fragile and should be eaten as soon after purchase as possible – another reason to get them at your farmers' market. Freshness is key!

Strawberries: Locally-grown strawberries are the cultivated descendants of the original wild varieties. Strawberries thrive along California's coast because western ocean exposure and Pacific winds insulate the fields from extreme temperatures and weather, providing ideal conditions for growing them year-round. Varieties you'll find in local farmers' markets include Frontera, Monterey, Albion, and others, each with slightly differing sweetness, season, and size.

Blueberries: Ah, blueberries, the wonder child of the berry world. Touted as one of nature's superfoods, they're filled with vitamin C, dietary fiber, manganese, and antioxidants. Substances in blueberries called polyphenols, specifically anthocyanins, give blueberries their blue hue, are the major contributors to the antioxidant activity of blueberries. The kind of blueberries you'll find are the High Bush, which is the kind farmers cultivate, as compared to Low Bush, which are the wild variety.

Raspberries: Raspberries are the most fragile of all the berry varieties, but with their tangy sweet taste and health benefits, they're worth every little bite. Varieties available in red, black, purple and gold hues, with red raspberries remaining the favorite. There are many hybrids within these colors as well. Ask your farmer which is best for your usage.

Blackberries: Blackberries, like raspberries, are considered brambles and if you grew up in the Bay Area you've driven by many a bush of wild Himalayan blackberries. Most farmers consider these a nuisance because they tend to take over land by spreading everywhere through their roots and long brambles. Some of the varieties grown by berry farmers are the Navaho and the Triple Crown.

You'll find only the best sweet summer berries at your local farmers' market. [Click here](#) to see which producers are at your favorite market.

TAGS