

VISIT FARMS NOW FOR FRESH SWEET CORN AND PEACHES

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As August winds to an end, some of the summer's most popular produce are making their debut.

"Sweet corn is coming on now and late-season peaches are still in good supply," said Mary Stewart, Oregon State University extension agriculture business and marketing faculty based in the mid-Willamette Valley.

Stewart encourages consumers to hurry out to local farms within the next month to get the best selection of their yellow favorites.

"Come to the farms early in the day because produce is picked at sunrise," said Stewart.

She also advises shoppers to call the farm or watch the farm's website or Facebook page to check availability of the produce. Crops ripen at different speeds depending on natural factors such as weather, water and temperature, so they are not always available for sale every day.

According to Betsy Verhoeven, mid-valley field crops extension faculty, when it comes to sweet corn there are the traditional sweet varieties (5 to 10 percent sugar), sugary enhanced (12 to 20 percent sugar) and then super sweet (20 to 30 percent sugar) varieties. Within each category of sweetness, yellow, white and sometimes bicolor varieties have been developed.

"I've often thought the white sweet corn was sweeter than yellow, but it really just depends on the variety," said Verhoeven. "Personally, I prefer the traditional yellow sweet varieties because I think there is more of a corn flavor, but they tend to get starchier fast so you have to pick them just at the right time."

Traditional sweet varieties include Jubilee (yellow), Double Taste (bicolor) and Silver Queen (white), while examples of super sweet varieties are Crisp N Sweet (yellow), Honey and Pearl (bicolor) and How Sweet It Is (white).

In western Oregon, sweet corn harvest time ranges from early August through October. "However with the dry spring and warm summer, everything is early this year, so don't hesitate to get out and get some of your favorite varieties," Verhoeven urges.

One way to find local farm names, locations, hours and product descriptions is through the Marion Farm Loop. Connect to the website: MarionFarmLoop.com, Facebook page or Instagram, or email: farmloop@gmail.com and sign up for e-newsletters by texting "ORFARMLOOP" to 22828. Oregon Farm Loop connects local family farms and value-added businesses with the local and traveling public and is a program of Oregon Agritourism Partnership (OAP), an Oregon nonprofit. OAP programs are made possible with the help of various partners, including local farms, OSU Extension Service and Travel Salem.

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