



General Produce

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Volume 40, Week 40

October 3, 2022

ONIONS, SHALLOTS & LEEKS

Comfort food cravings sneak back into our **kitchen repertoire** as soon as the first signs of fall appear.

Cooler temperatures, rain and cloudy weather are signals for putting **heartier dishes** on the menu. **Savory, warming** and **satisfying** begin with layers of flavor.

Good news then that we have new crop **onions, shallots** and **leeks** available to set the comfort pots in motion.

Pot pies, stews, casseroles and **soups** are nostalgic compilations that begin with the requisite sauteing of our favorite **edible alliums**.

More than **1,000 plant varieties** are found in the allium family. This includes **garlic, onions, leeks, shallots, ramps, chives** and several **decorative flowers**.

The **allium family** provides at least one of the **staple foods** in nearly every culture. We tend to take these *pungent to mild*, flavorful plants for granted as they've been around forever.

Onion demand has been very good despite many challenges in terms of product supply and shipping. It is definitely too early to tell how the 2022 crop will shake out in terms of size and yields. Early news is that onions are moving well and the market is good.

Determining which allium to use for cooking depends on what's on the menu.

Each type of onion has its own **specific flavor** and **aroma**, with characteristics ranging from mild and sweet to strong and potent. When a recipe simply calls for an onion, it usually means a standard **yellow onion**.



Yellow onions are all-purpose, versatile, and can be used in almost any dish. With a balanced flavor, they are neither too sharp or too sweet.

Similar to yellow onions in flavor, but not as sharp, **red onions** are characterized by a purplish-red papery skin and a pinkish-white flesh. They are commonly used in non-cooked dishes, such as salads, salsas and sandwiches due to their relatively mild, sweet flavor. Still, they can have a hot tendency depending on variety.

With their all-white flesh, **white onions** have a sharper and more pungent flavor than yellow ones. They are desirable in all cooked dishes and can be added to raw to salads and salsas.

Shallots are a little sweeter than regular onions and have a more subtle flavor. They are good in slow roasted or braised dishes, where their sweetness can enhance a dish without watering it down.

Leeks have a sweeter, more subtle and mild taste than onions. They are useful when building bases for stocks, broths, soups and mild casseroles.

Aromatic and **complex**, the wide range of all of these **edible essentials** varies from sweet to herbal tendencies. Cooking them mellows any aggressive nature by caramelizing their inherent sugars.

These **kitchen stalwarts** have our backs when looking to amp up flavor in those Autumn recipes. These loyal **pantry staples** keep us stocked up and ready to cook at a moments notice.

Subtle or bold, keep your onion game in high form. Inventory on hand means good cooking is inevitable.





HURRICANE ALERT~ The wrath of Hurricane Kay brought heavy rain up the West Coast in California last week, impacting several fruit and vegetable crops. Although the rain was needed, it delayed harvesting and shipping. Growers are still assessing crop damage. The previous heat along with hurricane rain will eventually affect the supplies of several items, which could include critical damage to some product depending on the locations. On the other coast, Florida is in the midst of Hurricane Ian this week. A major growing region for multiple crops, rest assured, supply chain disruptions, in addition to crop damages, will be in the near future. Mother Nature is large, in charge, and dealing some heavy blows.

Apples & Pears: The new crop harvest has been quite unusual this season. While we have several newly harvested varieties in stock— **Gala**, **Granny**, **Fuji** and **Golds**, there are others that seem to be taking a slow path to market. Each week we'll see more volumes and varieties coming into play.

There are great supplies on **Organic Gala apples** and **Organic Honeycrisp apples**. These are probably the two most promotable Organic apples right now. **Organic Granny Smith** and **Fuji** are just starting up out of the *Northwest* with very limited supplies and high costs.

Northwest pears are ramping up on new harvests. Look for a great selling season as we approach fall menus. Pears work well with **tree nuts**, **cheeses**, **lettuce mixes** and other **fall fruits**.

Berries: Substantial losses occurred in **strawberry**, **raspberry** and **blackberry** fields due to heavy rains from Hurricane Kay. Anywhere up to fifty percent losses may be experienced on strawberries. Harvesting was held back during the storm. Supply will be tight along with shortages.

Strawberry demand continues to exceed supply. The market is much higher. The fruit quality was already challenged with the previous heat and the rains. Most growers/shippers are still having to strip fruit for juice due to damage. Volume should go back up to pre-rain levels by next week. The quality on what is being harvested and all growers are trying to keep their product as close to the West Coast as possible.



Citrus: Current **navel orange** supplies are imported fruit. Volume looks to continue to be steady through mid-October. **California's** new crop will start late October/early November. **Valencia orange** demand is currently exceeding supplies. 113s/138s are extremely short with fair supplies of 88s and some 72s/56s.

California Star Ruby grapefruit have finished and we've transitioned into **Marsh Ruby** for the remainder of the season. Peak sizes 36's and 40's. New crop will be transitioning into **Texas** with some **Rios** out of California District 3. **Imported Murcott tangerines** are available.

Lime volume is steady, but quality not so great due to

weather conditions in *Veracruz, Mexico*. *California* District 2 **lemon** supplies have come to an end. Only remaining supplies are in storage. District 3 crop will be available to ship early next week. Peak sizes 165's/140's; limited on 115's.



Melons: Heavy amounts of rain impacted the melon region and the temperatures dropped dramatically.

Cantaloupes are normally ideal in high heat like the 90's. There is a strain on the market at this time as harvesting is getting under way again. Expect prices to escalate.

Grapes: The vines enjoyed the needed rain. However, Hurricane Kay reached into the grape area on top of the summer-related weather pressures of past heat. There are still plenty of **table grapes** for promotions.



Seasonals: **Stone fruit season** is coming to a halt. Plan to convert your sets to apples, pears and other fall items. **Pomegranates** are in stock and ready for fall promotions. This is truly a seasonal item, so enjoy them

while they are around.

Still only big sizes on **Mexican Keitt mango** varieties now. Peak sizing remains on size 4's, 5's and 6's. No small sized mangos at all. **Brazilian** mangos arriving on the East Coast only.

Tomatoes: **Oceanside** production out of *California* is having a major effect on the conventional Hothouse movement out west. Production out of *Mexico* has slowed a bit and hot weather earlier in the season is now having an effect on quality. **Canadian** production has been steady and demand back east has been good. Good demand on **Roma** and **Vine Ripe tomatoes**, along with much lighter production on both, will have a positive effect on Hot House moving forward.

California heirloom tomato crops are gapping until the end of next week against new winter plants. *Mexico* crop remains on gap as well.

VEGETABLES

Broccoli, Cauliflower & Celery: Broccoli and cauliflower are extremely sensitive to weather. Recent conditions have changed the supply situation or both conventional and organic crops. Heat accelerated quality issues in the fields, dropping yields and lowering volumes. Common quality issues are brown bead/pin rot on broccoli, and mold/discoloration on cauliflower. The bulk of this damage is visible at harvest as crews leave affected heads behind. These problems have increased after the recent rain, which will probably lead to even lower yields. Expect tighter supplies the next few weeks.



Lettuces: Markets across the board are very active. **Shippers are sold out daily.** The defects already caused by the recent soil disease invasion and now the hurricane will see some shortages and pro-rating of orders. There is still leaf burn from the past extreme heat along with other irregularities from the rain. Expect the product shortages on whole leaf and cut products as processors and shoppers come up short to demand.

Mixed Vegetables: Looking for items to feature? **Artichokes, Brussels Sprouts and Asparagus** are in good supply and quality. They make excellent fall menu items and retail promotions.

Mushroom supply issues persist. The compost raw material shortage has resulted in several farms experiencing lower than normal mushroom production. Some farms are now estimating severe production shortages of up to fifty percent of normal. This new shortage estimated to last roughly 6-8 weeks.

The **Northern California green bell pepper** market is finishing up in the next week or so. Steady volume in **Arroyo Grande** will transition to the **Coachella Valley** area at the end of October. **Red bell peppers** remain tight. Even with **Baja** starting in a couple of weeks, it will not ease the market. **Yellow and Orange bell peppers** have steady volume coming out of **Canada**; not much out of **Mexico**.

Cucumbers are quite short coming out of **Baja**. **Nogales** isn't due to begin for a few weeks. **Organic Hot House cucumbers** from **Baja** are limited.

Onions & Potatoes: Supplies are improving on all colors out of the Northwest area. Quality has been steadily improving on **yellow and white onions** as the skins have started to cure. Prices are coming down slightly this week. Good supplies on **red onions**. Market is steady.

The **russet potato** market is active and volatile and looks to remain this way into October. Supply is very good on smaller sized potatoes, while larger sizes 40

and 50 counts continue to be limited, quality is improving weekly.

Good supplies and quality on **conventional and organic red and yellow potatoes**. Potatoes out of **Stockton** are finishing up, just as **Washington's Skagit Valley** starts.



Eggs continue to take huge price increases weekly. This latest makes a \$12 per case increase over the last three weeks.



CURRIED CARROT & APPLE SOUP

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium leek, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced
- 1 medium fennel bulb, cored and chopped
- Kosher salt & ground pepper
- 2 pounds carrots, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch rounds
- 1 1/4 pounds celery root, peeled and chopped
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and chopped
- 7 gingersnap cookies
- 1 tablespoon Madras curry powder
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 teaspoon finely grated peeled fresh ginger
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- Toasted pumpkin seeds, for garnish
- Chopped mint, for garnish
- Chopped cilantro, for garnish



METHOD: In a large saucepan, melt the butter. Add the onion, leek, fennel and a generous pinch each of salt and pepper. Cook over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until softened and just starting to brown. Add carrots, celery root, apple, gingersnaps, curry powder, garlic, ginger and thyme. Cook, stirring, until carrots & celery root soften slightly, 10 minutes. Add the stock. Bring to a boil. Simmer over moderate heat, stirring, until the vegetables are very tender. Discard the thyme sprigs. Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender with the sour cream and vinegar until smooth. Reheat the soup if necessary. Season to taste. Ladle soup into bowls, top with toasted pumpkin seeds and chopped mint and cilantro and serve.

SERVES: 12



Enjoy this week's update



MARKET REPORT

For updated prices and availability contact

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“And all at once,
summer collapsed into fall”
~ Oscar Wilde

