



THE CO-OP **Produce** NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication for members of the Olympia Food Co-op and its surrounding communities

August 2018

August is the month when all the fabulous, juicy stonefruit finally bursts onto the produce scene and delights us with incredible smells and flavors. In the world of produce, stonefruit refers to fruit with a pit, and though cherries do count as stonefruit, what folks are often referring to are peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, and pluots. These fruits typically start arriving in July, but August is when we see a lot of variety, with many of these fruits being harvested when they are perfectly ripe and delivered directly to us from our regional growing partners in Eastern Washington. The intoxicating fragrance of a ripe peach and the juicy, messy joy of eating one represents the essence of summer for many people. We are so happy to provide you with the fabulous fruits of this very special time of year, and we hope you enjoy every bite.

-Erin, OFC Produce Manager

How to pick a ripe piece of fruit

The best way to know if a peach or nectarine is ripe is to pick it up and smell it. If it doesn't smell ripe, it probably isn't. Ripe fruit should be slightly soft to the touch, but squeezing can damage the fruit and causes bruising under the skin, so use your nose first to guide you in the right direction.

How to store stonefruit

Most stonefruit ripens pretty quickly at room temperature, so a good approach is to set out the amount of fruit you think you'll eat in the next few days and keep the rest in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator to prevent over-ripening and molding. Keep in mind, however,



that long-term refrigerator storage can change the texture of stonefruit, causing it to become mealy and pithy, so try to buy quantities you can enjoy in a week or so.

What if you want to can/freeze fruit?

Some of the growers we work with offer cases of "seconds" (fruit that is less cosmetically appealing) at a reduced rate. If you are interested in canning or freezing stonefruit, get in touch with me with the type of fruit you are looking for, and I can find out if it's available. Email erin@olympiafood.coop. ■

What exactly is a pluot?

This excellent explanation comes from bostonorganics.com: While plums and

apricots have naturally cross pollinated for hundreds of years, the origins of the American pluot date back to the early 1900s with the invention of the plumcot. Under very precise conditions, Luther Burbank, the father of modern horticulture, successfully bred a plum tree with an apricot tree. The resulting fruit was reportedly delicious, but difficult to grow and transport....when Floyd Zaiger managed to breed a plumcot tree with a true plum tree in 1989, he realized he had struck a golden combination and he trademarked the name "pluot," which indicated this hybrid's more dominant plum heritage....over the last two decades, more than 20 varieties of pluots have been developed, with new

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Organic
Pluot



=

3 Parts
Plum



+

1 Part
Apricot



Boston
ORGANICS
Fresh Organic. Delivered.

continued from front

ones coming out every year. By combining different plum varieties with different apricot varieties and breeding those pairings to create unique genetic lines, Zaiger has created pluots with golden yellow skin and creamy white flesh, others with speckled green skin and deep red flesh, and everything in between....and just as you can taste the difference between a McIntosh or a Gala apple, the difference in flavor between a Dapple Dandy and a Flavorosa pluot is quite significant.

Are Pluots GMOs?

With the unchecked growth of genetically modified organisms (GMO), there is understandably a lot of concern over the spread of GMOs in our food. Fortunately, you need not worry about pluots because pluots are not GMOs. Pluots are a hybrid fruit created through the cross pollination of two species in the same genus. As we explained above, this can and does occur naturally. In the case of cultivated pluots, the hybridization is conducted in a controlled environment to achieve a desired result and prevent bees or the wind from interfering. Though the hybridization is overseen by humans, the process is drastically different from bioengineering....most of the fruits and vegetables our grandparents ate were hybrids. A grapefruit is a cross between a pomelo and an orange and peppermint is a hybrid of watermint and spearmint. The apples, bananas, broccoli, carrots and kale that we know so well are all different from their ancient, wild counterparts and have been domesticated through many generations of hybridization. ■

Stonefruit Cobbler

Gourmet, June 2008

Oh my gosh, this is so good. A little more complicated and time consuming than most of the recipes I make, but it makes a great big batch and is a hit at summer parties.

For filling:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 pounds mixed stone fruit, pitted and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick wedges (8 cups)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pure almond extract (or use maple flavoring like I did for another delicious variation)

For topping:

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornmeal (not stone-ground)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- Rounded $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon heavy cream, divided
- 2 teaspoon sugar

Equipment:

- a round cookie cutter (2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches)

Make filling:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F with rack in middle. Butter a 3-quart glass or ceramic baking dish.
2. Toss together filling ingredients in a large bowl. Spread out in baking dish and bake until just bubbling, 10 to 20 minutes. Make topping while filling bakes: Whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt, then blend in butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 1 cup cream and stir just until a dough forms.
3. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and lightly dust with flour, then roll out with a floured rolling pin into a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick round (about 10 inches in diameter). Cut out biscuits with lightly floured cutter. If necessary, gather scraps and reroll once, then cut out more biscuits.
4. Arrange biscuits $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart over hot filling. Brush tops with remaining tablespoon cream, then sprinkle with sugar. Bake until topping is golden and fruit is bubbling in center, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool to warm, 30 minutes. ■