

Munch ON THIS



A Bit of Sunshine

By Marcia Rae
March 31, 2010

I call this rain camp rain - heavy, thick drops, cold and drenching, the kind of rain that was common in the Coast Range logging camp where I spent my early days. It seems like the sunny days of summer will never arrive, nor the fresh, sweet fruits that brighten any day.

So right now, it is really tempting to eat strawberries from Santa Barbara, plums from South American, and melons from Mexico. But the reality of fresh fruit bought this time of year in the grocery is a far cry from the sugar plum fairy tales dancing in our water-logged heads.

Imagine an Oregon strawberry picked fresh from the vine and popped into your watering, waiting mouth. Now face the reality of the berries you just brought home in their landfill filling container. Strawberries have such a short shelf life that they are sprayed with fungicide as they are picked. Otherwise they rot on the shelf. And, like washing a sponge, there is no way to wash the chemicals off of a strawberry. Flavorless and empty, they look good, but they are plumped with water and devoid of natural sweetness. Know what I mean? Have you, too, been taunted and then left unsatisfied?

Consider, though, for a moment what you could have had, had you chosen local blueberries like those found on WillametteLocalFoods.com. Here is the description of these berries from Springbank Farm in Lebanon.

"USDA Certified. Focus on enriching soil biology and fertility through meticulous and regular monitoring and incorporation of essential micronutrients, such as Actagro humic acid, an approved organic treatment. No spray on the berries. Overhead irrigate from South Santiam River, which we test for bacteria multiple times a year and which is one of the cleanest rivers in the Valley. Create habitats to foster bees and other beneficial insect and animal life. Especially proud of our relationships with local hospitals and schools in order to serve all socio-economic groups and provide meaningful farm projects and fair wages for those we employ."

And this comparison of nutrition per 100 gram—

	Organic	Conventional
Vitamin A	40 IU	5 IU
Vitamin C	3 mg	4 mg
Vitamin E	1.4 IU	.4 IU
Calcium	19.8 mg	11.5 mg
Phosphorus	12.5	34.2
Zinc	.224 MG	None
Potassium	110 mg	93.4 mg
Magnesium	7.8 mg	5.9 mg
Protein	.8%	.5%

At \$2.64 per pound and double the nutrition, why settle for mediocrity?

Munch on This – Why not give it a try? Go to WillametteLocalFoods.com. Shop local.

PS – Remember the Spring Square Dance – April 9 with caller Kirby Goode. Beginners are welcome. At the Rec Center, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$10 or \$20 for the family.

PSS - Munch Night, April 16 is local author, Elin England who will be cooking up local food with Penny of the Bramble House Restaurant. Elin's book, *Eating Close to Home, A Guide to Local Seasonal Sustenance in the Pacific Northwest*, is a perfect inspiration to eat local, healthy food. 6 p.m. Call the Bramble House to RSVP and save your spot as dinner seating will be limited. Or just come for the discussion at 7 p.m.

PSS – Farmer Market opening April 17, 9 a.m. to noon. Music by Joe Hall.

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