

Farmgate Roundup 26/11/05
Simon Marnie 702 and Liz Stephens 4567 7804

All the fresh summer produce is starting to appear on the Farmgate Trail.

At the moment stone fruit is coming into season and will continue well into next year. There are newly picked slipstone and other varieties of peaches, plums, white and yellow nectarines and strawberries available right now in various locations on the Farmgate trail.

You can also find fresh local vegetables along the trail.

At the moment you can get snapping fresh baby carrots, crisp cabbage, silverbeet, cauliflower, the versatile Sebago potatoes, dicon radish and fresh garlic.

Plenty of tomatoes, cucumber and many varieties of lettuce, all straight from the farms and orchards. Check the Farmgate website for locations.

You can even find other things on the Farmgate Trail.

The Hawkesbury River runs through the Farmgate Trail, do you know you can even get prawns on the trail. We now have two prawn fishermen as members, they mainly harvest Hawkesbury River Prawns.

Hawkesbury River prawns have a great flavour.

Prawns from the Hawkesbury River are famous for their sweetness and delicious taste, they're school prawns, so they are a little smaller than other varieties but they make up for that in their taste, its quite unique. Sadly, consumers tend to favour larger prawns but these sometimes don't have as much flavour. The Hawkesbury River prawns have not been farmed so you can be sure that no chemicals, preservatives or antibiotics have been added, and you usually buy them fresh not frozen. This way you know how fresh they really are as they show a use by date.

How do you find suppliers of Hawkesbury River prawns?

Various businesses try to sell the prawns but they aren't always available. As Gary (one of the fishermen says), "they can only take what the river is willing to give at the time" supply can be affected by tides, weather conditions and other variables, this week there may be plenty and next week none but the Hawkesbury River prawns are worth the wait.

Also

If you don't feel like preparing the prawns yourself, some of the lovely restaurants on the Farmgate trail, have fresh Hawkesbury River prawns on their menu, delicious!

While we're on this subject we should mention the amazing Koi fish.

These are incredible looking fish that are perfect for ornamental ponds, The Koi started out as European Carp then the Japanese began breeding them and perfected their colour. Brilliant colour. Koi are very important in Asian culture, they are a symbol of strength in Japan.

They are not suitable for dams and aquariums and should never be let out into natural Australian waterways. They are used for decorative purposes and need to be kept in purpose built ponds. Koi grow very large and live for a very long time, one fish in Japan is known to have survived for 210 years. They can grow to between one and five metres in length so they need quite a large pond to live in.

Rosalie & Col Chalinor are Koi breeders on the Farmgate trail and can answer any questions about these remarkable fish.

A couple of things to mention.

On the 4th of December there'll be celebrations in Windsor with music and activities for the kids. This is to commemorate Governor Macquarie's journey to the Hawkesbury in 1810 and they'll be re-enacting events of that time.

Come and experience colonial times preferably in colonial dress, it'll be a fun day. That's Sunday 4th December in Thompsons Square Windsor.

Don't forget the last Farmers and Gourmet market is to be held at Castle Hill showground on the 10th of December. Lots of fresh produce and gourmet items to fill the cupboard with.

For more details and information about anything we've discussed or to obtain a Farmgate map go to...

For all contact details go to www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au or write to PO Box 447 Windsor 2756. And don't forget Farmgate is all about fresh , local produce.