



Fruit Box

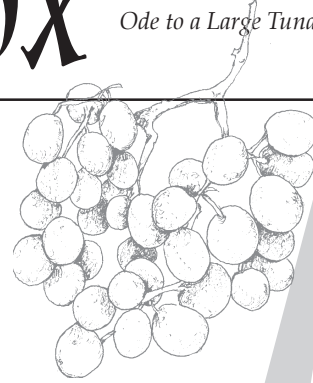
All around you were lettuces, sea foam of the earth, carrots, grapes, but of the ocean truth, of the unknown, of the unfathomable shadow, the depths of the sea, the abyss, only you had survived, a pitch-black, varnished witness to deepest night.

Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market by Pabo Neruda

Box Contents

To be eaten first May need ripening...

Champagne Grapes	Rival Apricots
Bluecrop Blueberries	Grand Sweet Nectarines
Skeena Cherries	Catalina Plum
Valencia Oranges	



Note: For more even ripening, try placing your fruit on the countertop, where there is good airflow around each piece of fruit, instead of arranging it in a fruit bowl (see also suggestion on the reverse).

Ripening and Storage Techniques

Champagne Grapes from Joe Sogomonian's ranch near Fresno, CA. They are likely really a variety called Black Corinth which is often marketed as the Champagne. It is a small purple grape with a delicious wine-like sweetness and a little less crunch than other table grapes. It is usually available at gourmet markets when fresh, but is more common in dried form as the Zante currant. They should keep for a week to 10 days in the refrigerator.

Bluecrop Blueberries are from John Nelson, an Indiana grower located near Granger. Bluecrop is the leading mid-season variety. Once home, remove berries from their container and pick out any rotten or unformed berries as well as the tiny stems. Blot the rest of the fruit and place on a shallow plate covered with plastic wrap and put in cold storage. Blueberries will last up to 10 days when stored this way.

Skeena Cherries are grown under the Stemilt label in WA. Skeenas are a large, very firm, sweet cherry with a good tolerance to splitting. It has thick stems that hold up well in storage. It is very important to store cherries in the coldest part of your refrigerator, usually near the back and bottom. The cold storage of cherries will help protect the texture and flavor from the effects of warm summer temperatures. Cherries can decay more in one hour at room temperature than they can in twenty-four hours at 32°F. The rule of thumb with cherries, as with berries, is not to wash the fruit until you ready to use it. This will help to preserve your cherries.

Valencia Oranges are grown by Eco Farm in CA. Valencia oranges originated on the Iberian Peninsula and are the world's most important commercial variety. Valencias are thin-skinned, nearly seedless, and excellent juicers whose juice doesn't lose its vitamin C overnight in the refrigerator. Store oranges in a cool place outside the refrigerator and try to eat them within a few days. If you need to keep them longer, refrigerate in a plastic bag or in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator.

Rival Apricots are also grown under the Stemilt label by a grower in WA. Rivals are large, oval fruit with a light orange skin and a red blush. The flesh is orange with a smooth texture, is low in acid, and has a mild flavor. Store unripe apricots in a paper bag at room temperature away from heat and direct sunlight. Once ripe, usually in two to four days, apricots will keep for a day, maybe two, if stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Let the fruit come to room temperature before eating, and don't wash the fruit until you are ready to use it. Remember to handle ripe apricots gently, being especially careful not to break the skin.

Summer Bright Nectarines are grown by Ferrari Farms in the San Joaquin Valley of California. Ripe nectarines should yield to gentle pressure along the "seam" and produce a sweet aroma. Ideally ripen at room temperature (not exceeding 78° F). Move to cold storage and eat within 1-3 days. Longer storage will diminish their juicy flavor.

Catalina Plums are grown by Twin Girls in CA. They are a large, black, and one of folks' favorite fresh market plums. Catalinas are sweet and juicy but still firm when fully ripe, with very little tartness on the skin or near the pit. Catalinas are crisp, juicy and totally refreshing. Catalina plum trees grow 12-18 feet tall and ripen in late July. Store your plums at room temperature (between 51°F and 77°F) until fully ripened and ready to eat. To accelerate the ripening process when you bring them home, place the plums in a paper bag along with a ethylene producing fruit such as a banana, apple or pear. Plums are ripe and ready to eat when they give off a sweet plum aroma and are soft to the touch. Once ripened, store the plums in the refrigerator until eaten but keep them away from ethylene producing fruit so they do not become over ripe.

5th Delivery

1

early August

Grower Profile

Soghomonian Farm



This "trademark" pumphouse houses the Three Sisters offices. The Soghomonians created the Three Sisters label for marketing their fruit.

Joe Soghomonian's 470-acre ranch is located near Fresno, in the California Central Valley. Known for his Champagne Grapes, Joe has been growing several varieties of grapes since 1981. He has been a farmer all of his life and took over his parents farm when they retired.



Fellow vendor John Warner has a lot of questions for Joe regarding his choice of cover crops.



Joe and Johnni Soghomonian enjoy showing off their organic farming operation.

5th Delivery

2

early-August

If it seems like you are not able to eat all of your fruit before it spoils, you might consider putting your whole box in the refrigerator when you get it home. You can take out a few pieces at a time to ripen. This doesn't mean the fruit in your refrigerator is immune to bruises or mold. Keep a close eye on fruit whether ripening on the counter or in cold storage, the mold spores on one piece of fruit may easily jump to others. These instructions may help mitigate some of the problems we have experienced with some of the California soft fruit this year. Due to extreme weather (wet in the spring and record high temperatures recently) the quality and storageability of fruit from California has been variably affected. Some of the fruit growers may have less fruit and may have changed their standards for the season to try to make orders and ends meet.

Fruit News and Facts

After last week's piece on the rising costs of organic fruit (past fruit newsletters are available at www.AngelicOrganics.com/NL or at www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/newsletters.php), I had one shareholder ask a very good question, "why aren't we buying more local fruit?" Below is interview with Rick from Coop Partners and a midwest apple grower I did last season to get a better sense of why there isn't more local organic fruit available.

When I asked Rick Christenson of Co-op Partners why our fruit boxes don't contain more local fruits, he said, "there is just not that much local fruit out there and hardly any of it is organic." Harry Hoch, an apple grower near LaCrescent, Minnesota, elaborated about some of the challenges he faces as a Midwest grower. While Hoch Orchards is largely not organic, his farm has been certified with the Midwest Food Alliance as an environmentally friendly farm. Of his 30 acres, he is transitioning one acre into certified organic (the remaining 29 acres are marketed as low input). "Part of the reason we're transitioning such a small part of our operation is because of the high pressure for apple scab and cedar apple rust that growers in the Western U.S. (FYI many Washington orchards are on the dry side or east of the mountains) aren't affected by." He commented that while California apple growers worry about codling moths (the greatest insect threat to apple orchards from California to Washington) they are more easily contained with tracts of dry sage brush between orchards. However, in the midwest, the landscape is dotted with woods, pastures, and prairies where unmaintained apple trees make disease and insect control more difficult to manage. In addition, Midwest apple growers have pressure from two insects that don't threaten the western apple growers at all: the plum circulio and the apple maggot. The closest organic grower that Harry knows of is Turkey Ridge Apple Orchard in Gay Mills, Wisconsin, an hour away. Harry and some other area growers recently formed an "informal" organization known as the Upper Midwest Organic Tree Fruit Growers Network. They developed the organization so that growers in this area can communicate with each other about marketing, growing techniques, and challenges. For more information on Hoch Orchards and their growing practices check their website at: <http://hochorchard.com>.