



# Fruit Box

'What? Ridden on a horse?'  
'Yes'  
'You're using coconuts!'  
'What?'  
'You've got two empty halves of coconuts and you're banging them together!'  
'So?'

Monty Python

## Box Contents

### To be eaten first

Black Mission Figs  
Thompson Grapes  
Mature Coconuts  
Gingergold Apples

### May need ripening...

Flavor Rich Pluots  
Casselman Plums  
Bartlett Pears  
White Star Peaches

**Note:** For more even ripening, try placing your fruit on the countertop, where there is good air-flow around each piece of fruit, instead of arranging it in a fruit bowl.

Ethylene Table (see 6th delivery NL for details)

EP: Ethylene Producer  
ES: Ethylene Sensitive  
EN: Ethylene Neutral

## Ripening and Storage Techniques

**Black Mission Figs (EP)** are grown by Maywood Farms in Corning, CA. Sweeter than honey, these figs are the cream of the crop. Figs that are not fully ripe when purchased can be ripened on the counter at room temperature. Ripe figs are quite perishable and should be used as soon as possible. They can be refrigerated for up to three days. To prevent bruising, place figs in a single layer on a plate lined with paper towels and cover with plastic wrap. See 2005 Delivery 8 at [AngelicOrganics.com/nl](http://AngelicOrganics.com/nl) for a fresh fig recipe and a grower profile.

**Thompson Grapes (EN)** are grown biodynamically at Marian Farm near Fresno, CA. Thompson grapes are thin-skinned, sweet and juicy, and can be eaten fresh or dried. Marian Farms' grapes are also unique in that they are not treated with gibberellic acid or "gibbed," as most grapes are in both the organic and conventional markets. Gibberellic acid-3 is a commercially produced plant growth regulator (i.e. growth hormone) which is sprayed on seedless grapes to increase grape size and yield. These grapes will store for up to 7 days in cold storage.

**Mature Coconuts (EN)** or Pakva coconuts are from one of New Harvest Organics growers in Mexico. A mature coconut is a coconut with a hard giri or pulp, and very little water. These coconuts are a very special treat as they are extremely difficult to grow organically (growers often use a high amount of pesticides and fungicides). A mature coconut, unopened, can be stored at room temperature for about three or four months. Once opened, fresh coconut can be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag for only a few days. Freeze the coconut for longer storage. See page 2 for more about coconuts.

**Ginger Gold Apples (EP)** are from Jerzy Boyz in WA. This is a crisp and juicy apple with excellent taste. The Ginger Gold apples are round with a smooth green-yellow skin that has a slight red blush. It is best to keep apples as cold as possible so store them in the back of your refrigerator. Apples in good condition should last up to six weeks in the refrigerator.

**Flavor Rich Pluots (EP)** are grown by Twin Girls farm in CA. Pluots are a hybrid of a plum and an apricot and mainly retain the characteristics of a plum. Their skin is a light reddish-yellow color with some speckling. This fruit has one of the highest Brix level readings on a refractometer, meaning that it has a very sweet taste. Keep at 65-70 degrees for the most ideal ripening conditions. See past NL's for more ripening suggestions for pluots, plums, and peaches.

**Casselman Plums (EP)** are grown by Sutherland farms in CA. The flavor is sweet when ripe. Casselman plums will be fairly firm to slightly soft with smooth skin. The coloring will be an even red. Move to cold storage when fully ripe and keep away from any ethylene-producing fruits that have a tendency to speed the ripening process.

**Bartlett Pears (EP)** from Gilbert Orchards in Yakima, WA. Bartletts ripen to bright yellow and give off a lovely aroma. Sweet and juicy, the Bartlett is perfect for eating out of hand but is also an excellent canning pear. Leave them out at room temperature and they will ripen in a few days to a week, depending on the maturity when delivered. Most pears show subtle changes in color as they ripen. If you choose to hold off the ripening process, the fruit should be refrigerated and will hold three to four weeks there until ready to ripen. Once ripe, a pear will not last much more than a couple of days, even in the refrigerator.

**White Star Peaches (EP)** are grown by Bridges Orchard in OR. Handle them gently, their skin is delicate and the flesh has a creamy texture with a rich and complex flavor. At home, store peaches on the counter at room temperature until ripe. To quicken the ripening process, place peaches in a paper bag until fully ripe (no longer than a day or two). For some variety, try adding a peach to a batch of homemade salsa. I can imagine a peach salsa (with or without tomatoes) as a topping for ice cream.

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# Coconuts

To read more about coconuts, I recommend <http://http://tinyurl.com/gtelb>, <http://tinyurl.com/gv8r9>, or great recipes at <http://tinyurl.com/hcd7a>.

Coconuts are a dry fruit (also known as a drupe, not a true nut). They grow in the salty and sandy soils of the tropics right at the beaches. According to Rebecca Wood, author of the *New Whole Foods Encyclopedia* "coconuts [bob] along the Gulf Coast [and] float as far as Norway. Unlike other transplanted foods dispersed by colonists and traders, self sufficient coconuts set sail on their own and planted themselves throughout the tropics." The coconuts three eyes reminded Spanish and Portuguese explorers of a goblin and so they named the strange hairy fruits *coco* the name for goblin. Some have translated the word as monkey face. In some parts of the world, trained monkeys are used to harvest coconuts. Training schools for monkeys still exist in southern Thailand. Competitions are held each year to discover the fastest harvester.



the name implies they are older than young coconuts, which have more water and softer, more gelatinous meat (you have maybe seen these white shaven nuts at your local health food stores). The water inside is not to be confused with milk. The water inside the coconut is not the delicious milk that is used in Asian cuisines. Coconut milk is made by adding water to shredded coconut. Coconut water is used as a nutritious drink throughout the tropics.

All parts of the coconut plant are used. The fronds are used as a roofing material; the nuts hairy outer fiber is soaked in salt water until it's soft enough to be spun into rope and clothing. Coconut shells are used for polishing floors, fuel, or the bodies of musical instruments. The nutmeat is an important source of food and oil. It is delicious in sweets or curries with fish, vegetables, and grain dishes. In the winter months, I like to spice up my oatmeal with a bit of toasted coconut and milk for a change of pace.

The coconuts in your fruit boxes are mature coconuts. As

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## Coconut Milk and Coconut Cream

These two ingredients are used in curries as well as in desserts and beverages. Coconut milk is the liquid squeezed from the grated flesh of mature coconut after the flesh has been soaked in lukewarm water. Coconut cream is a richer version. To make your own coconut milk, use 3 cups grated coconut to 5 cup water or 2 cups water to get coconut cream. Soak the coconut in the water for 15 minutes. Mix well with your hand, then tip into a muslin-lined strainer placed over a bowl. Squeeze all the liquid out of the muslin. The operation can be repeated with the already squeezed coconut to produce another batch of thinner coconut milk which is acceptable in dishes such as Tom Kha Soup.

## I've got a lo-ve-ly bunch o' coconuts ... Big ones, small ones, some as big as yer 'ead! Give 'em a twist, a flick o' the wrist...

The only experience I have **opening coconuts** is when I worked at an Italian restaurant in Galena, IL. Every year the owner of the restaurant threw a huge themed party for patrons and local B&B owners. Fred, the owner, decided on a pirate theme my first year there. He ordered a few hundred coconuts, and we spent a slow and rainy Sunday drilling holes in the coconuts and pouring out the milk and refilling them with pina colada mix. To our dismay when we took the coconuts out of the freezer for the party, we had filled them too full and many had split. The guests didn't seem to mind. I thought it might have been good to consult some advice from someone who really knows how to open a coconut. I found the following on-line:

### Step 1. Draining the coconut water from the nut. (adapted from <http://tinyurl.com/on246>)

In order to drain the liquid from the coconut (coconut water) you obviously need to make a hole in the nut. The easiest way seems to be to do this is with a pair of scissors or a nail. Using one blade of the scissors probe the three "eyes" on the end of the coconut until you locate the soft one. Then use the scissor blade to ream a hole in this eye. You should easily be able to make a large enough hole to drain the coconut. Drain the coconut water into a glass. (Drink the coconut water or refrigerate it for later use, or add it to fruit juice, cocktails, curries, or use it as a part of the water base in making coconut milk as above).

### Step 2. Breaking open the coconut.

After draining the coconut put it inside one of the plastic bags which are now used by practically all supermarkets. Then wrap this bag around the nut. Place the wrapped nut inside another plastic grocery bag (it's a good idea to double or triple bag the nut for added strength.) Holding the handles, swing the bag down onto a concrete step, sidewalk, garage floor, etc. You can also throw the bag down which gives you a little more control over the impact (a hammer is also effective though less dramatic). The impact will shatter the coconut shell into several pieces. Throw the nut down several times until the nut is broken into pieces of manageable size. The impact will not only break the shell but will cause much of the coconut meat to separate from it. Open the bag and remove the coconut pieces. Coconut meat which is still attached to the shell can be separated by inserting the blade of a sturdy knife between the meat and the shell and then giving it a twist. The meat will normally pop away from the shell. Rinse the coconut meat to wash off any bits of shell and store in the refrigerator. Some people peel off the thin brown layer but it's o.k. to eat it along with the meat. If you are going to grate the coconut for use in a recipe you might want to peel off the brown so that the coconut is snow white.