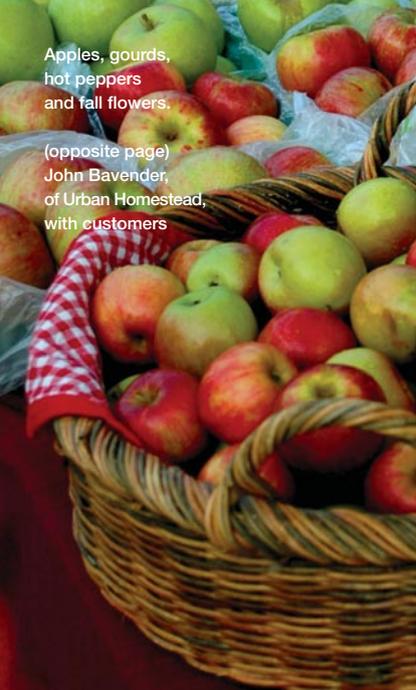


Apples, gourds,
hot peppers
and fall flowers.

(opposite page)
John Bavender,
of Urban Homestead,
with customers





IT'S Market

Time to enjoy the sights, tastes, smells, and sounds of B-town's booming Farmers' Market (and schmooze with your neighbors, too).

TIME AGAIN!

By Christine Barbour Photography by Daniel Orr



Bloomington is blessed with a remarkable Farmers' Market—the largest producer-only market in the state. Every Saturday morning, from April through November, farmers and producers come from all over south-central Indiana to sell their wares to hungry market shoppers. As the months pass and the seasons change, the hues of the market go from soft to brilliant to burnished, and the flavors go from delicate to explosive to hearty. Join *Bloom Magazine* Food Editor Christine Barbour and photographer Daniel Orr on a seasonal tour of the Market's bounty.



It seems like everyone has beans in June...

{April, May, and June}

Spring

ON THE FIRST SATURDAYS of April the produce is all pale green and pinks, the soft pastels of spring. Asparagus, for those lucky and early enough to get it, frilly salad greens, violet onions, rose-colored radishes, and spring flowers grace the market stands.

The mornings are often cold and I can see my breath as I leave my warm car and head to the Showers parking lot. The farmers, out since dawn, are blue of face and red of fingers. The crowd is muted and purposeful as they shop quickly and head to the warmth of home.

One Saturday I wait 'til the sun warms the day and I arrive at the Market late, when there isn't much to choose from. But Teresa Birtles of Heartland Family Farm has some terrific wild cress, sharp, pungent, peppery. Pesto, I think, and I pick up some Capriole cheese to round out the edgy cress. When I get home I throw the cress into the food processor with a handful of roasted pistachios and a clove of garlic. I puree it with some pistachio oil and toss it all with hot penne pasta. It's a little sharp, but the melted goat cheese makes it just right.

By early June, the Market begins to hit its stride. Not too hot, not too crowded, lots of good music and gorgeous produce that begins to make the transition from the pastels of spring to the vibrant reds, purples, and greens of summer. My shopping takes much longer on these warm mornings because there are so many people to stop and greet, market friendships that have been hibernating all through the cold months, but that come to life with the sunny heat of summer.

It seems like everyone has beans in June—string beans, roma beans, green beans, yellow beans, striped beans. I get some of the broad, flat romas. I trim them, cut them in half and stew them in a little olive oil with a slivered sweet onion, salt and pepper, and about a half cup of water. When the water simmers out, I throw in a quarter cup or so of chopped kalamata olives, a small tomato, diced, and a small garlic clove, pressed. Then I cook them until they are tender and the tomato and olive oil have formed a lovely sauce. I adjust the salt and pepper, cut some crusty bread for the purpose of sopping up that sauce, and voila, another delicious market lunch.



(opposite page) Yellow, green, and purple beans.

(clockwise from top left) Randy Marmouze on banjo, Jamie Gans on fiddle, Tamara Loewenthal dancing, and Deb Justice on guitar; oyster and shiitake mushrooms; radishes; daisies; and spring onions.



In August the heat explodes and the market colors seem to shimmer.

Summer

{July, August, September}

BY JULY IT'S GETTING HOT. I'm up extra early to hit the Market before the sun gets too high. Everybody else is up early too and the bustle is on. Though musicians play on the main stage, other singers, bands, and dance groups are stationed in the far corners of the Market—one song fading out and into another as I make the rounds. The air is spicy with the scent of popping kettle corn and sizzling sausages and I am hungry. The produce is plentiful and glorious. Sunny summer squash, rosy beets, and purple baby kohlrabi tempt me and my market bags get heavy, quickly, the handles cutting grooves in my hands as I chat with friends and vendors.

I also find a gorgeous leg of lamb from Fiedler Farms, an arrowhead cabbage, shiitake mushrooms, and that fabulous Traders Point Creamery Cheese, Fleur de la Terre, and I make my way home for lunch.

In the kitchen I caramelize a slivered onion in some good olive oil and then add four medium-size yellow sunburst squash, cut into bite-size chunks. I sauté them too, until they are soft and starting to brown, then add salt to taste, a few good grinds of pepper, two cloves of garlic, minced up, a tablespoon or two of chopped mint from the garden, and a lemon's worth of juice. As that cooks, I toast some pine nuts in the oven until they are fragrant, and crumble some goat cheese. Toss the whole thing with pasta, with some cheese, pine nuts, and a little more mint over the top. The leg of lamb is for dinner, braised with many, many cloves of garlic, and artichoke hearts, a slow-cooked dish that makes the house smell wonderful all day long.

In August the heat explodes and market colors seem to shimmer. Fabulous flowers, blushing peaches, deep purple eggplants, a kaleidoscope of peppers and tomatoes galore—red, yellow, orange, green, and striped. The Market sponsors a tomato-tasting with Slow Food Bloomington and the market-goers line up to sample the sweet, tangy, acid fruit. There are lots of lines at the Market in



(opposite page) Eggplants.

(clockwise from top left)
Violet eggplants and yellow
tomatoes; summer sausage;
garlic; and bicolor corn.



Watermelon and goat cheese for lunch—a match made in heaven.



August—but none so long as the one that forms for the best corn. Watermelon looks lovely and I try to juggle full bags and round melons and my arms tell me it's time to go home.

Watermelon and goat cheese for lunch—a match made in heaven. While they can make a great salad, tossed together with vinaigrette and a little chopped tarragon, I can't wait for that. I stand by the sink, dripping melon juice down my chin, eating wedges of crisp sweet melon and chunks of Capriole's Old Kentucky Tomme.

The tomatoes last into September and I make some yummy panzanella—an Italian bread salad full of fresh vegetables. I chop up tomatoes and cucumbers, salting and peppering them and letting them give up lots of their sweet juices. I add chopped onion and peppers and a bit of garlic and dress it all with the best possible vinegar and olive oil, and then toss in cubed stale bread. Some people sauté the bread in olive oil to crisp it, which is delicious, but rich; some soak it in water and squeeze it dry first. I just dice it up and throw it in there. When it has absorbed the juices but is still toothsome, I add a good handful of chopped basil and adjust the salt and pepper.

As I am about to leave the Farmers' Market one Saturday, so weighted down with end-of-summer vegetables that I can hardly haul the basket one more step, I stop at one of my favorite stands to buy some of the sweetest, cutest, tiniest eggplants you have ever seen. Adding a couple of pints of those to my bulging basket, I catch sight of a display of table grapes. Grapes in Indiana? Oh. My. God. Those grapes are a revelation, bursting with a honey-like sweetness and intense flavor.



(opposite page) Capriole
Piper's Pyramid goat cheese;
watermelons.

(clockwise from top)
Summer flowers; Chester
Lehman, Olde Lane Orchard,
selling peaches; summer
squash and little eggplants.





The fall market is all deep oranges, yellows, browns, and greens.

{October and November}

Fall

THE CROWDS GROW SPARSER as the mornings get frosty. By the time the holiday market rolls around on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, it will be darn right cold as shoppers pick out holiday wreaths and gifts. The fall market is all deep oranges, yellows, browns, and greens. Pumpkins and squash and persimmons glow in the golden sunshine, and greens like chard and kale thrive in the cooler air. There is a tax to be paid on these autumn Market Saturdays—everything I want to buy weighs a ton and I make multiple trips to the car with my squash,

potatoes, yams, and frozen beef, the better to make stews and soups for cozy evening eating.

I get home with my bounty and peel and dice a butternut squash. I toss it with olive oil, salt and pepper and roast it in the oven 'til it caramelizes. I sauté a slivered onion in olive oil 'til it turns golden brown, then add sliced shiitake mushrooms, a few cloves of roasted garlic, chopped green onion, and chopped sage. I mix all the vegetables together with some good balsamic vinegar and toss with rigatoni pasta, and sprinkle the whole thing with grated asiago cheese as the house fills with the sagey scent of holiday cooking, and another Bloomington Community Farmers' Market year comes to a close.*

(opposite page)
Breakfast radishes.

(clockwise from top) Beets and
dragon's tongue beans; chile
peppers; pumpkins; and Albert
Shake of Graber Produce
selling tomatoes.

