

# MICHIGAN PEACH SPONSOR NEWS ISSUE 1 - 2004

Produced by the Michigan Peach Sponsors—a non-profit organization for research and promotion of peaches  
P.O. Box 1035, Coloma, MI 48038, 269-463-3351 (Don Baiers)  
web address: [www.michiganpeach.org](http://www.michiganpeach.org)



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National Peach Council Representative— Paul Friday

## ***Mark Your Calendar —Peach, plum, and early apple showcase 2004***

September 8, 2004.

Hosted by International Plant Management.

Location: Summit Sales, 55826 60th Avenue, Lawrence, MI 49064.

This is an excellent opportunity to see, taste, and hear commentary on new fruit varieties. Samples and speakers are coming from Michigan, New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. For further information contact Summit Sales 269-674-8866, or Michigan State University Extension 269-944-1477 x205 (Bill Shane).

## **MDA Peach Crop Survey important to Michigan Growers —Bill Shane, District Agent for Fruit and Marketing, Michigan State University**

Selected peach growers are asked each year by the Michigan Department of Agriculture to estimate their peach crop yield. Response to the survey is voluntary, but the results are very useful for peach marketing. Sellers and buyers of Michigan peaches request this information so that they can plan their buying and marketing strategies.



The survey is short, asking only for four questions for each grower: 1) bearing acreage of peaches 4 years or older, 2) expected percentage of full crop, 3) expected bushels in current year, 4) bushels produced last year. This information is part of the nationwide July and August Peach Reports of the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The Michigan peach industry was surprised by the large crop in 2003. The July 2003 NASS forecast for Michigan was 42 million pounds for fresh and processing combined. The August 2003 forecast was 52 million pounds, a 24% increase compared to the July estimate.

Regardless of the cause of the large crop in 2003, a better crop estimate in July may have alerted the Michigan industry that packing and marketing was going to be a challenge and needed more advanced planning. So, my message to those of you receiving a peach crop survey please take the time to provide your best estimate and mail it in.

## ***Select A Taste of Michigan* Marketing Program Will Expand for 2004 Season**



The Michigan peach industry teamed up with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and the USDA Cooperative Development Services to promote Michigan peaches in the “Select a Taste of Michigan” program. Peach is one of several Michigan products promoted by this program.

In 2004, the program will expand beyond the Grand Rapids and Holland area covered in 2003 to include the Detroit area, working with Meijer, Spartan, Super Kmart, Kroger, and Farmer Jacks chains. Peach industry cooperators in 2003 include Greg Orchard Produce and North Bay Produce.

Throughout the harvest season, consumers were wooed to buy Michigan peaches by in-store tasting demos, store flyers and radio spots. The behind-the-scene work is done by Grand Rapids Community College culinary students under the direction of Chris Lietzau, MDA, and Melinda Curtis, independent consultant.

For further information about the Select a Taste of Michigan program contact Christine Lietzau, Michigan Department of Agriculture 517/373-4084 or Melinda Curtis 248 722-5408 or (248) 681-0248, E-mail: melmca@aol.com, or see web site [www.michigan.gov/mda/](http://www.michigan.gov/mda/)

### **Peach Marketing Dilemma** — Jerome L. Frecon, Agricultural Agent, Rutgers University.

(New Jersey has been confronted with the same marketing issues as Michigan. This is an excerpt from the 2nd of a two part article in the Rutgers Plant & Pest Advisory Newsletter, Fruit Edition, December 9, 2003.)

“In recent years, the U.S. food retailing industry has undergone unprecedented consolidation and structural change through mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures and the growth of new competitors like Wal-Mart, B. J. Wholesale, Costco and Target. With this, over 4400 supermarkets have been purchased. Basically the biggest have gotten bigger with little loyalty to any particular state or region. With bigger stores come fewer but larger buyers who request or demand certain prices and services from suppliers.

What can we do to help the seller deal with this problem? We might ask for federal legislation to introduce antitrust legislation that keeps the big from getting any bigger. We can also give up trying to sell to the big stores and focus on the smaller stores where we can better compete. Because there are not enough of these stores, we will have to do the things that give us more strength in dealing with the “big boys”. As suppliers we may have to build alliances and cooperate more in forward selling and supplying peaches. Of course, we are stickering fruit now but we may have to provide other services related to distribution and inventory management. We may have to consider cooperating with peach suppliers from other regions to increase our supply and marketing season if we can’t do those ourselves. These growers may be in other countries. We may even have to cooperate and work with shippers who grow other commodities. To get shelf space we may have to pay slotting fees. Each of you that sell directly to food retailers already know that many of these things are a condition of doing business with selected suppliers, thus many of these suggestions are in place.”

“...It seems there are not many value added or convenience products for peaches. Are we doing enough to provide fresh peaches for restaurants and institutional markets?”. “...Are we trying hard enough to develop value products to use fresh peaches? One shipper is working on a peach juice and another on a peach wine. Are there other products we can introduce? The National Peach Council has worked with the Agricultural Marketing Service to buy California fresh individually quick frozen peaches for nutritional programs. Is New Jersey getting enough of this market. Can we work up some deal with our large restaurant industry to use more peaches?”

#### **CEREXAGRIC INC**

9359 Riverside Drive, Grand Ledge, MI 48837  
517-626-9920

#### **MACRO PLASTICS**

15N793 Pheasant Fields Ln, Hampshire, IL 60140  
847-697-2859

**Fruit façade—Jennifer Vincent — Editor’ Note.** *Michigan Farmer, March 2004.*

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Oh, they look so pretty! All waxed up and no place to go—especially not in my shopping cart.

When did we as a society start asking for our fruits and vegetables to be immaculately groomed? It’s become the biggest form of deception in the produce section. Those waxed, sparkling green cucumbers look so lovely on the shelf, but seem to lack any kind of luster on the table—laden with large seeds and the taste of what I can only describe as watermelon rind.

I’ve learned my cucumber lesson, but I recently fell prey to peaches. As a kid, I plucked many peaches from Grandpa’s trees behind the house. They weren’t real big, maybe a little fuzzier than I liked, but they were absolutely to die for. The juice was almost bursting from those little gems.



**ENTICEMENT**

So, when I saw those large, golden and red peaches in the supermarket the other day, I couldn’t resist. I carefully selected a half dozen.

But, just as fancy clothes and expensive jewelry don’t make a person, I soon realized I’d been duped. In my excitement in bagging those beauties, I’d somehow ignored the little sticker that accompanied each one. It said, “Produce of Chile.”

Now, even before I took that first bite, some of the anticipation had waned. Yet, I held out hope—they were perfectly colored and nicely firm.

As I sunk my teeth in, I knew immediately it was not what I had bargained for. Not only was it the worst texture— mush — it was actually brown inside! What was this ball masquerading as a peach? It had absolutely no juice and the flavor, for the short time that I left it in my mouth, was virtually nonexistent.

Maybe I had gotten a bad one? I still had five left. After biting into the second peach — only to have a repeat performance— I decided it was a better idea to cut them open. To my dismay, not a single one was edible.

You’d think I would have learned my lesson with the cucumbers. It cost me \$4.89 to realize that peaches in the winter are just not meant to be. And, I’ve also come to know that Mexican and Peruvian asparagus is nothing but green-colored straw.

So, with my newfound revelations, I have established some new buying habits. I will not, ever again, risk buying fresh fruits and vegetables that aren’t grown in my own country. And, if at all available, I will look for Michigan-grown products. Washington’s polished and individually packaged Red Delicious is a far cry from Michigan’s pick — flavor still rules.

On my last trip down the produce aisle, I picked up some huge, bright red and delicious strawberries from California and a dozen juicy navel oranges from Florida.

I’ll wait for Michigan peaches!

<b>GREENSTONE FARM CREDIT</b> 8302 Edgewood Rd, Berrien Springs, MI 49103 269-471-9329	<b>RADOMS FARM SUPPLY</b> 7330 Territorial Rd, Watervliet, MI 49098 269-468-5898
<b>GREG ORCHARDS AND PRODUCE</b> 4949 N. Branch Rd, Benton Harbor, MI 49022 269-944-1413	<b>HILLTOP FRUIT TREES LLC</b> P.O. Box 538, Hartford, MI 49057 269-621-3135
<b>ADAMS COUNTY NURSERY</b> P.O. Box 108, Aspers, PA 17034 717-677-8105	<b>BIRDS EYE FOODS</b> P.O. Box 1050, Fennville, MI 49408 269-561-8211

**Peach varieties on display --** The SW Michigan Research and Extension Center near Benton Harbor is the home of an extensive peach and nectarine variety trial under the direction of Dr. Bill Shane.



Saturn peach growing in SWMREC peach and nectarine variety trials



Plot plan to guide visitor to varieties in SWMREC variety trials

Over 200 varieties are planted representing a wide array of fruit types and sources. The collection includes the latest Stellar and Flamin' Fury selections, white peaches from California and New Jersey, USDA Byron Georgia peaches, processing varieties from Ontario, and many others.

The variety trial is open for public viewing from 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday. A self-guided plot plan is available and trees are labeled. Go to the SWMREC web site for directions to the station and more details ( [www.msue.msu.edu/swmrec](http://www.msue.msu.edu/swmrec) ) or call 269-944-1477.

**New Poster and Pamphlet Feature Michigan Peaches**  
The Michigan Peach Sponsors and Michigan State University teamed up to create new promotional material for direct marketers of Michigan peaches.

The brightly colored poster and bulletin provide a wealth of information about varieties and sources of Michigan peaches, including ripening seasons for traditional and new peach varieties. The pamphlet also includes recipes and nutritional information about peaches. These educational items were produced as part of a Michigan Department of Agriculture specialty grant program.

Copies of the poster and pamphlet can be obtained by contacting Bill Shane at the SW Michigan Research and Extension Center 269-94-1477 x 205 or e-mail [shane@msue.msu.edu](mailto:shane@msue.msu.edu).

**Michigan Peaches**

**On Beyond Red Haven...**

Michigan is known for the first stone peach, the sweet white genes carry in the world developed in southern Michigan at the former South Haven Experiment Station. Today's stone peaches are many new and old varieties that have been developed through the Michigan Peach Sponsors' breeding programs in south-west Michigan.

Availability in Michigan	Older Peach Varieties	Newer Peach Varieties
Early July	Shelburne	PF1
Mid July	Starrs Diamond	PF18
Late July	Lowell Diamond	Early Star, Sun-rose, Sunburst
Early to mid August	Red Haven, Belleisle, PF124, 104, Sky	Harlowe, Starburst, Sunburst, PF128, PF124, Redskin, PF Laska 13
Mid to late August	Chickadee, Loring, Suncrest, PF11, Canadian Harmony	Canadian, PF1400, PF1401, PF Laska 21
Late August	Chickadee, Redskin	PF2040
Early to mid September	Starrs, Fajita, Sunburst	PF214, PF216, PF217, PF218, PF219, PF220

**Michigan Peach Sponsors**  
P.O. Box 1013  
Coloma, MI 49038

**Michigan Peaches Are Available July Through September!**

**MICHIGAN SWEET PEACHES**  
From the Great Lakes Region

Michigan is famous for the world-famous Red Haven peach, developed right here in Michigan. Many new peach varieties are available that have tremendous eye-appeal and great flavor. So whether you prefer the traditional peach varieties or are fans of the new, you will find the delicious Michigan peach to suit your fancy.

Ripening Order (July to September)	Traditional Yellow-Flesh Peach Varieties	Newer Yellow-Flesh Peach Varieties
July	Harbinger	PF1 Quincecrest
July	Narrow Diamond	PF58
July	Garnet Beauty, Early Red Haven	Rising Star, Summer Sensation
July	Red Haven, PF124, John Boy, Belleisle	Starfire, Blackglobe, Violet, PF128, PF134, Redskin, PF Laska 13
July	Glohaven, Loring, Suncrest, PF17, Canadian Harmony	Constar, PF19-007, PF Laska 21
July	PF21, Cranberry, Redskin	PF20-007, Anika, PF24-007, Chickadee, PF25, PF Laska 20B
July	Harcrest, Fayette, Encore	PF37A, PF28-007, PF30-007, PF35-007, Autumnade

**MICHIGAN PEACH SPONSORS**  
P.O. Box 1013  
Coloma, MI 49038

Peaches are a great source of potassium, the vitamins A and C, and are a natural source of fiber, with no fat or cholesterol. One medium-sized peach has only 25 calories.

Other types of peaches — Michigan is an important producer of specialized processing peaches for canning, freezing, and fresh. These varieties have firm flesh, crispness, excellent shelf life, and a spicy acidity many people like for eating fresh. Varieties to look for: Enterprise 5, Enterprise 7, Galaxie, Alford, Vanguard, Valcan, Virgil, Vermont, Queen King, Celestine, and Vending.

White peaches for the consumer — People looking for new taste are enjoying white peaches, including several new varieties having improved firmness. White peaches to look for: Carolina Belle, Karan Rose, Bluebeque, and White Lady. (A "flavor boost")

**JACK BROWN PRODUCE**  
8035 Fruit Ridge NW, Sparta, MI 49345  
616-887-9568

**MOSER FRUIT TREE SALES, INC**  
5329 Defield Rd, Coloma, MI 49038  
Matt 269-468-4356

**CULBY'S FRUIT BROKER**  
1010 Bluecreek Rd, Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
269-944-1881

**THE NURSERY CONNECTION**  
P.O. Box 874, Coloma, MI 49038  
269-468-5732, 509-969-0542 cell

**STARK BRO'S NURSERIES**  
P.O. Box 398, Louisiana, MO 63353  
800-435-8733

**SUMMIT SALES**  
55826 60th Avenue, Lawrence, MI 49064  
269-674-8866

**TRICKL-EEZ COMPANY**  
4266 Hollywood Rd, St. Joseph, MI 49085  
269-429-8200

**PETERSON FARMS, INC**  
3104 Baseline Rd, Shelby, MI 49455  
231-861-6333

# Guidelines to Harvesting, Handling, and Storing Peaches and Nectarines — Bill Shane, District Fruit Agent, Michigan State University Extension

Proper harvesting, handling, and storing techniques are critical for successful peach marketing. The harvest manager should watch for skin color development—approximately 1 to 2 weeks in advance of the firm-ripe stage. Once peaches have filled out and developed adequate background color, the critical factor to monitor is firmness. Firmness monitoring is particularly useful to help guide harvest of peach varieties, especially those varieties with background color nearly or completely covered with red blush.

Fruit firmness is monitored by squeezing and with a penetrometer. A penetrometer can help to time picking to obtain fruit firmness needed by the intended market. Ideally, peaches should be picked so that they arrive in the hands of the consumer slightly firmer than the ideal eating condition (Table 1).

Peaches harvested firmer for distant markets require special handling to avoid quality problems. Peaches, especially late season varieties, harvested firm ripe 8 to 16 lb are prone to chilling injury when stored in the temperature range of 36 to 50 F, the so-called “killing zone”. Firm ripe peaches should stay out of the 36 to 50 F temperature zone until fruit firmness drops to 8 lb or below.

One of the biggest challenges to profitability for the peach industry is dealing with the wide range of fruit firmnesses brought to packing houses (Figure 2). Careful monitoring of fruit ripening, picking, and transport are the keys to good packouts.

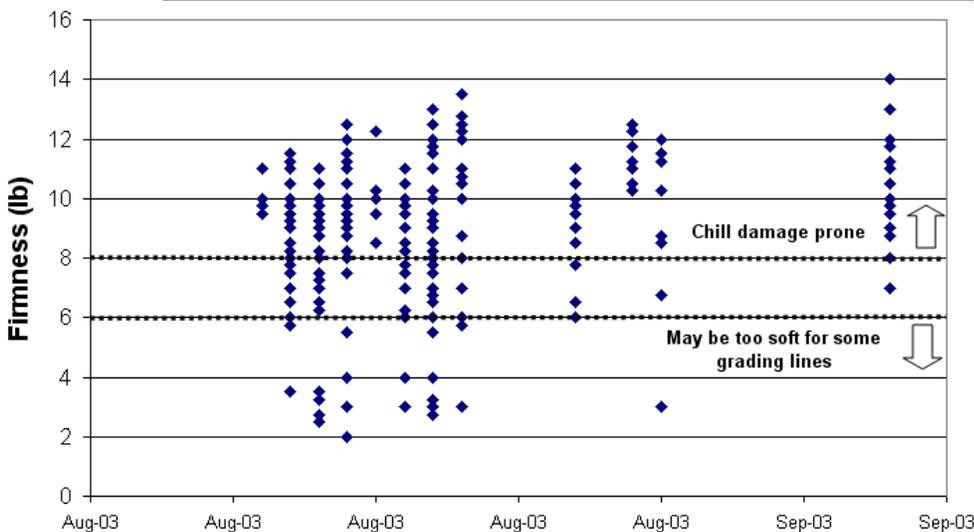
*This work is supported in part by a MDA specialty block grant.*



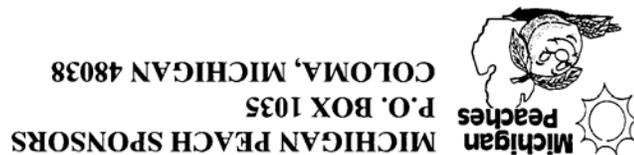
Fruit firmness can be measured with penetrometers available from farm supply businesses. For peaches use a 8 mm diameter tip (5/16” pear tip). Remove a dime to quarter-sized slice of peel, and then use slow uniform force to submerge the tip to the guide mark.

**Table 1. Ideal peach and nectarine firmness for steps in supply chain for three marketing destinations**

<b>Long distance chain store</b>
16 to 12 lb*: picking, packing, transport to regional warehouse
12 to 8 lb: soft enough for transport to retail stores
8 to 6 lb: transfer to retail store & put out on display
3 to 2 lb: purchased by end consumer
<b>Medium distance chain store</b>
12 to 8 lb: picking, packing
8 to 6 lb: transport to retail market, put out on display
3 to 2 lb: purchased by end consumer
<b>Local farm market</b>
8 to 6 lb: picking and display
3 to 2 lb: should be purchased by end consumer



Firmness readings for fresh market peaches at time of delivery to commercial packing house in 2003 harvest season. Each dot is the reading for one fruit. Fruit firmer than 8 lbs are prone to chill injury if stored in temperature range from 36 to 50 F. Fruit less than 6 lb firmness may be too soft for some grading lines.



*Inside:*

- **Peach, plum, and early apple showcase 2004**
- **"Select a Taste of Michigan" program expands in 2004**
- **MDA Peach Crop Survey important to Michigan Growers**
- **Fruit façade**
- **Peach Marketing Dilemma**
- **Peach varieties on display**
- **New Poster and Pamphlet Feature Michigan Peaches**
- **Guidelines to Harvesting, Handling, and Storing**