

Colorado grows world-class produce

Colorado farmers and ranchers are often known for growing crops like corn and wheat, or raising livestock like cattle and sheep. However, many farmers in our state grow the fruits and vegetables found in local grocery stores and farmers' markets! Farmers who grow fruits and vegetables are also commonly known as growers or producers.



Colorado is home to many different growing regions, which are areas with certain weather and soil conditions that are suited best for specific agricultural crops. From north to south, east to west, the climate in Colorado can vary greatly throughout the year. Cool nights and warm days on the Western Slope allow farmers to grow crops like sweet corn, peaches, apples, and wine grapes. The northern Front Range is known for favorable soil conditions

and a longer growing season, where farmers can grow vegetables like lettuce, cabbage, spinach, carrots, onions, potatoes, sweet corn, and pumpkins. The southeast corner of Colorado experiences hot summer days, making the growing conditions

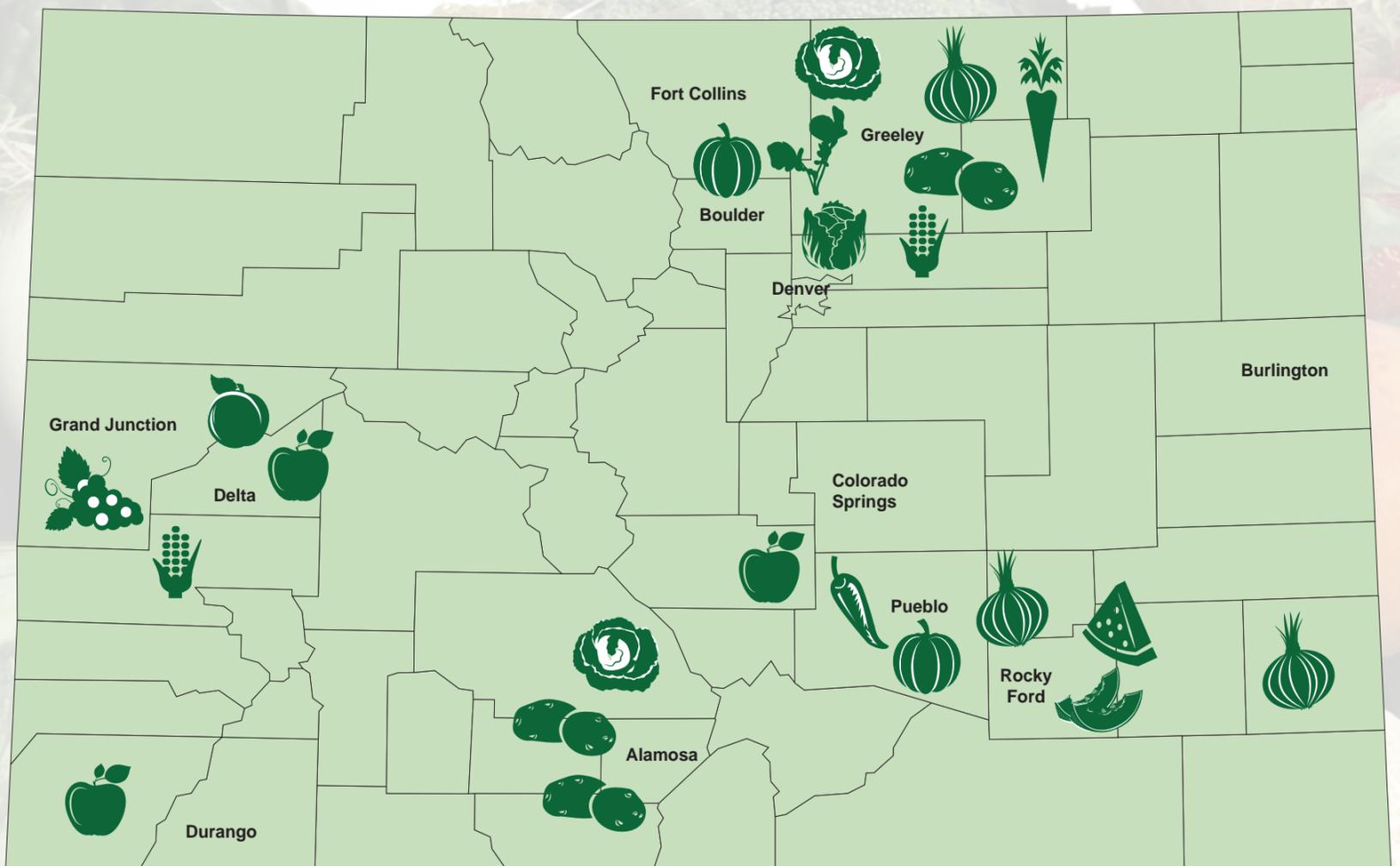
perfect for melons, onions, and chili peppers. Finally, farmers in the San Luis Valley are especially known for growing potatoes, thanks to their mild summers and high altitude (7,600 feet!).

Where is Colorado produce grown?

Colorado grows a wide variety of fruits and vegetables under some of the best climatic conditions in the country. Warm days, cool nights, and a lot of high-altitude sunshine helps flavor and nutritional

development in the produce. These ideal growing conditions are unique to Colorado. The map below shows some of the primary produce production areas in Colorado. Where are your favorites grown?

Colorado Produce



KEY

-  Apples
-  Carrots
-  Peaches
-  Pumpkins
-  Watermelon
-  Cabbage
-  Lettuce
-  Peppers
-  Spinach
-  Wine Grapes
-  Cantaloupe
-  Onions
-  Potatoes
-  Sweet Corn



It's our nature

Like the majestic mountains that define us, Colorado has several unique features that set us apart from other states, allowing us to grow the very best produce in the United States:

Water – Colorado is a headwaters state. The majority of our water originates from mountainous peaks that can rise above 14,000 feet, flowing down the Continental Divide into our agriculture sustaining rivers, like the Colorado, Rio Grande, South Platte, and Arkansas. At the source, water is freshest and purest, and this creates great produce.

Altitude – We are also known as the “Mile High State.” Our higher altitude provides greater and brighter ultraviolet light intensity, which increases growth and ripening.

Sunshine – Colorado is famous for its blue skies and more than 300 sunny days each year. Abundant sunshine allows our crops to attain optimal sugar and sweetness levels.

Temperature – We have the perfect temperature variance for growing quality produce. Our warm days and cool nights work together to condense crop sugars. That means sweeter and better tasting produce. Plus, our higher altitude and colder winters result in fewer pest and plant diseases.

Location – Colorado is centrally located and close to major U.S. and export markets. That means faster, time-sensitive transportation and greater savings on freight costs. The benefit for you is more competitive pricing and higher profit margins.

Food Safety – The Colorado Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperates with growers to verify the implementation of Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices. These audits provide assurances to retailers and food service operators that growers and shippers are conforming to the highest standards for promoting food safety.

Why buy Colorado produce?

The Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (CFVGA) is the go-to resource for Colorado fresh fruit and vegetable farmers. They connect Colorado growers with industry, government, and education experts, as well as consumers. Their goal is to expand fresh fruit and vegetable production in Colorado.

To learn more about Colorado produce, check out these two video from the Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association.

Watch this YouTube video: <http://bit.ly/2YCK3HL>



Watch this YouTube video: <http://bit.ly/2xxZyQV>



Did You Know?

- There are more than 85,000 acres in production for fruits and vegetables.
- Around 2,100 farms in Colorado grow fruits and vegetables.
- There are more than 100 farmers' markets that take place in the summer all over Colorado .
- Fruit and vegetable production is almost a \$300 million industry in Colorado.

Colorado Proud celebrates 20th anniversary!

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its award-winning Colorado Proud program. When consumers eat local foods it boosts Colorado's heritage, lifestyle, environment, and economy, plus agriculture as one of the biggest economic drivers in the state.

The Colorado Proud program started in 1999 as a tool to help Colorado consumers easily identify locally grown, raised, or processed food and agricultural products. Over the past 20 years the program has grown bigger than anyone imagined. With more than 2,600 members, Colorado Proud is a resource for consumers, farmers, ranchers, producers, chefs,

restaurants, schools, retailers, grocery stores, and many more.

In 2018, 89 percent of consumers said they were more likely to buy a product if it was labeled with the Colorado Proud logo. More than half of consumers sought out Colorado Proud products because purchasing Colorado products supports local businesses and our state's economy.

In celebration of the 20th anniversary, the Colorado Proud program has a new logo. The new logo reflects the buying and purchasing habits of Colorado consumers. It also matches well with the new logos for the State of Colorado and Colorado Department of Agriculture.



The Colorado Department of Agriculture and the Colorado Proud program will be on the road in August (Colorado Proud Month), traveling across the state to educate consumers about looking for the new Colorado Proud logo and buying locally. The full event schedule will be available soon at www.coloradoproud.org.

When are your favorites in season?

The Produce Calendar below shows all the fruits and vegetables grown by different farmers across Colorado, and when they are in season. "In season" means the crop is ready to be harvested and eaten. As you can see, not all crops are harvested at the same time

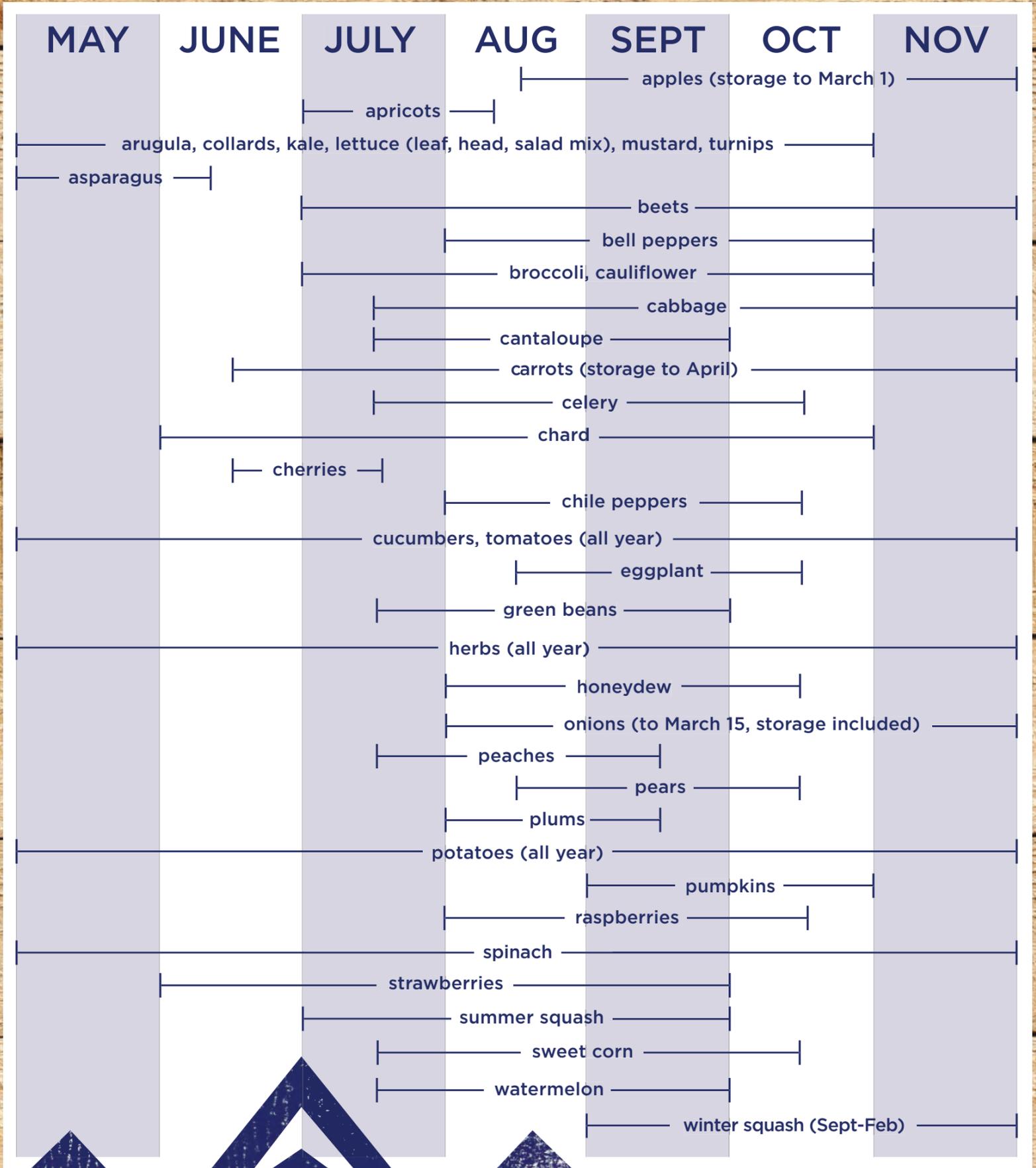
throughout the year. Some grow better early in the year when the weather is cooler, and some prefer to grow all summer long in the hot sun. You will also notice that a few of the crops, like mushrooms and tomatoes, are grown all year. This is because some farmers have

greenhouses or indoor structures, where the outside weather does not affect the crops! The crops that have the word "storage" next to their names means they can safely be stored in temperature-controlled buildings for long periods of time.



COLORADO PRODUCE CALENDAR

FIND YOUR SEASONAL COLORADO-GROWN FRUITS & VEGGIES



COLORADOPROUD.ORG

Play along! Answer the questions below using the Colorado Produce Calendar.

Name three vegetables that are in season in July.

True/False: Chili peppers are in season at the same time as asparagus?

Are peaches in season April-June or July-September?

Name three fruits that growers are going to harvest in September.

Is there a fruit or vegetable on this produce calendar you have never tried before?

Do you think asparagus prefers warm or cool temperatures to grow?

Where to buy Colorado farm fresh produce?

Colorado produce can be bought throughout the year in many different places! Have you ever been to your local farmers' market? This is where farmers in your area bring their freshest and most recently harvested produce to sell to the people in your community. Because Colorado has cold and snowy winters, most of the farmers' markets in our state do not run all year. They usually start up sometime in May or June and are open certain days of the week until late summer or early fall. This summer, ask your parents to take you to your local farmers' market!



Look for the Colorado Proud logo at grocery stores, farmers' markets, garden centers and restaurants. By buying locally grown, raised and processed food and agricultural products, you are receiving high quality fresh products and helping Colorado's economy, local farmers, ranchers, greenhouses, manufacturers and processors in your area.

You can find the most recent list of farmers' markets in Colorado by going to www.CoFarmersMarkets.org. Or, download the free Colorado Farm Fresh mobile app from the Colorado Department of Agriculture available for Apple and Android devices.

Colorado Proud School Meal Day is September 18th!

The Colorado Departments of Agriculture and Education would like to invite Colorado schools to participate in the annual Colorado Proud School Meal Day on Wednesday, September 18, 2019. This is a day to celebrate Colorado agriculture and to educate schoolchildren about healthy eating.

In order to encourage eating habits that will promote a lifetime of optimal health, it is essential to teach children about the importance of eating foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and low-fat dairy products. Proper nutrition is critical if our educational programs and our students are going to continue to excel.

Colorado farmers and ranchers produce food items that provide the nutrients children and adults need to thrive. Agribusinesses contribute more than \$40 billion to the state economy annually and provide more than 170,000 jobs. With more than 38,000 farms and ranches encompassing 31 million acres, it is easy to understand the value this industry adds to Colorado.

To learn more about the Colorado Proud School Meal Day, please contact Wendy White of the Colorado Department of Agriculture at (303) 869-9174.



Content for this issue of *Colorado Kids* was provided by the Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and the Colorado Department of Agriculture Colorado Proud program. To learn more about Colorado produce, visit ColoradoProduce.org and ColoradoProud.org or connect with them on Facebook and Instagram.



COLORADO
Department of Agriculture



Colorado Foundation for Agriculture

This issue of *Colorado Kids* was produced by the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture in cooperation with the *Denver Post Educational Services*. The Colorado Foundation for Agriculture is a 501(c)3 non-profit education corporation that works with community stakeholders to help meet our shared vision of advancing agricultural literacy. Our mission is connecting Colorado educators and students to their food, fiber, fuel, and natural resources.

Subscribe free to the Colorado Reader

The *Colorado Reader* is an eight-page student activity newspaper available FREE to Colorado educators, thanks to our sponsors. The reading level is geared towards 4th through 6th grade students, however educators across all levels have found the *Readers* a

valuable asset in their classrooms. The *Readers* are sent in classroom sets of 30 copies and accompanied with an educator's guide.

The *Colorado Reader* reinforces standards for reading, writing, and communicating, science, math, social studies, and more! Planned topics for the upcoming school year include: Colorado produce, What are Cooperatives?, Renewable energy; Soil, Water, and Air Stewardship, and Colorado beef and nutrition.

To learn more about the *Colorado Reader* or to sign up your classroom for a free subscription for the 2019-2020 school year, visit: <http://bit.ly/2XyjG4M>

Free lesson plans on the Curriculum Matrix

The National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix is an



online, searchable, standards-based database of classroom ready lesson plans and resources for K-12 educators. The Matrix contextualizes national education standards in science, social studies, and nutrition education with relevant instructional resources linked to Common Core Standards. Start searching the Matrix now on our website GrowingYourFuture.com.

The Colorado Foundation for Agriculture thanks all of our sponsors and supporters. When you donate to the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture, you help make the next generation of young people agriculturally literate. To learn more or to make a donation, visit www.GrowingYourFuture.com.

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