



## Growing Organic

- Much of the produce labeled organic at the store or at the farmers market MAY still be treated with pesticides.
- The government allows farmers to treat the produce with low level (less toxic) pesticides while labeling it ORGANIC.
- Many farmers run very SMALL operations so they are only allowed to use these mild pesticides by law, therefore it could be considered "organic". However they are not allowed to sell it as organic unless they have an agriculture license stating that their produce is organic.
- Organic licensing is VERY EXPENSIVE due to many soil tests that are required.
- For a small farmer, organic licensing is NOT cost effective. So while most of our farmers are not technically selling "organic", they are protecting their crops with the least invasive pesticides possible because legally they cannot use the stronger chemicals.
- The strong chemicals can only be used in more industrialized farms.
- Small farm operations have a vested interest in preserving their soil because they are stuck on a fairly small plot of land to be used over and over again.
- When shopping at the farmers market keep in mind the smaller the farm operation the more likely you are to find nearly organic produce.

## Farmer's Markets Offer Benefits to the Community

### 1. Taste Real Flavors

The fruits and vegetables are the freshest and tastiest available. Fruits are allowed to ripen fully in the field and are brought directly to you—no long-distance shipping, no gassing to simulate the ripening process, no sitting for weeks in storage.

### 2. Enjoy the Season

The food is seasonal, and helps you to reconnect with the cycles of nature in our

region. As you look forward to asparagus in spring, savor sweet corn in summer, or bake pumpkins in autumn, you reconnect with the earth, the weather, and the turning of the year.

### 3. Support Family Farmers

Buying directly from farmers gives them a better return for their produce and gives them a fighting chance in today's globalized economy.

### 4. Protect the Environment

Food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to your plate, which uses large amounts of natural resources (especially fossil

fuels), contributes to pollution, and creates trash with extra packaging. Conventional agriculture also uses many more resources than sustainable agriculture and pollutes water, land, and air with toxic agricultural by-products. Food at the farmers market is transported shorter distances and is generally grown using methods that minimize the impact on the earth.

### 5. Nourish Yourself

Most food found at the farmers market is minimally processed, and many of our farmers go to great lengths to grow the most nutritious produce possible by using sustainable techniques, picking produce right before the market, and growing heirloom varieties.

### 6. More Variety

At the farmers market you find an amazing array of produce that you don't see in your average supermarket: red carrots, a rainbow of heirloom tomatoes, purple cauliflower, green garlic, watermelon radishes, blood oranges, sweet limes, and much, much more.

### 7. Promote Humane Treatment of Animals

You can find meats, cheeses, and eggs from animals that have been raised without hormones or antibiotics, who have grazed on green grass and eaten natural diets.

### 8. Know Where Your Food Comes From

A regular trip to a farmers market is one of the best ways to connect with where your food comes from. Meeting and talking to farmers and food artisans is a great opportunity to learn more about how and where food is produced.

### 9. Learn Cooking Tips, Recipes, and Meal Ideas

Farmers, ranchers, and artisans at the farmers market are often passionate cooks with plenty of free advice about how to cook the foods they are selling.

### 10. Connect with Your Community

The farmers market is a community hub—a place to meet up with your friends, bring your children, or just get a taste of small-town life.

### High Desert Farmers Market

Victor Valley College—  
Lower Campus

Every Thursday 8 am to 12 pm

[www.highdesertfarmersmarket.com](http://www.highdesertfarmersmarket.com)

### Big Bear Farmers Market

Located on the main drag of Big Valley  
at Division and Big Bear Blvd.  
in front of the Big Bear Convention Center.  
Every Tuesday April through September  
(maybe October)  
8:30 am to 1 pm