

ORGANIC TORONTO

Farmers markets keep it fresh

Compiled By STEVEN DAVEY

Say no to the Frankenfoods and preservatives dominating our diet and follow NOW's guide to the best in Toronto's organic food shopping, eating out and living

DUFFERIN DELECTABLES

DUFFERIN GROVE ORGANIC FARMERS MARKET 875 Dufferin, at Bloor,
416-392-0913, www.dufferinpark.ca/market/market.html

Thursday 3:30 to 7 pm

Dufferin Grove Park is one of the most community-minded recreation facilities in the city and for nearly 10 years - rain or shine, year round - has been the site of a market offering affordable organic produce and products. Set up in the great outdoors under towering shade trees (except in winter, when it moves into the rink house), the organic gathering finds seasonal veggies from **Sosnicki Farms**, **Plan B Organics**, **Greenfields Farms** and **Thorpe's Organic Produce** as well as a full line of beef, pork, chicken and lamb cuts including smoked bones for the family hound from **Beretta Organics**.

In addition, eco-friendly **Birds and Beans** sells its line of fair-trade coffees, **Camros Organic Foods** preps nutritious Middle Eastern rice 'n' bean casserole combos and **Country Meadows Gardens** bottles its own olive oil and presses artisanal goat and sheep cheeses.

Vinehaven Catering and Bakery's **Heather** and **Lenny Karmioli**'s CV includes stints at Stratford Chefs School and legendary Chez Pansse and the French Laundry in California, which explains why their fabulous honey walnut and Callebaut chocolate sourdoughs cause lineups.

Besides being certified organic, **Molly B's Gourmet Organics**' line of chutneys, jams and marmalades are also kosher and halal. And though not officially certified, **Forbes Wild Foods**' dried wild mushrooms, preserved fiddleheads and cattail hearts are all foraged.

RIVERDALE PARK POSSIBILITIES

RIVERDALE FARMERS MARKET Riverdale Park West, Winchester at Sumach,
416-961-8787, <http://friendsofriverdalefarm.com/market.htm>

Tuesday 3 to 7 pm until October 26

Now near the end of its fourth season, Cabbagetown's weekly market attracts a better-heeled crowd than the larger Dufferin one. Many of the same vendors take part - among them Sosnicki's, Plan B, Vinehaven Bakery, Beretta's, Forbes Wild Foods - but some are exclusive to this gathering, like green-grocers **Grenville Farms** and **Pine River Organic Farm**. Others include **Mapleton Organic Dairy**, the eco-conscious **Merchants of Green Coffee** and **Ruth's Hemp Foods**' roster of hemp-infused salsas, oils and power bars.

Home gardeners will want to check out **Urban Harvest**'s variety of heirloom

tomato seedlings, and animal lovers will want to stock up on **Best Friend Organic Pet Food**'s selection of chews and snacks.

SUSSING OUT ST. LAWRENCE

ST. LAWRENCE MARKET Jarvis at Front, 416-392-7120,
www.stlawrencemarket.com

South market Tuesday to Thursday 8 am to 6 pm, Friday 8 am to 7 pm and Saturday 5 am to 5 pm; north market Saturday from 5 am

Though Toronto's largest farmers market offers much that's all-natural and preservative-free, only a few of its vendors are exclusively organic. Located in the lower level, **Uncle George's Place** (416-601-2112) specializes in sprouts and cress – organic alfalfa, daikon, red radish, mustard, baby onion, sunflower, buckwheat – as well as vacuum-packed bags of baby greens. And what tree-hugging feline fancier could resist a pot of organic cat grass?

A few stalls over, **Ying Ying Soy Food** (905-847-5592) has developed a line of delicious organic tofu dishes like both firm and soft nigari, as well as vacu-packed sweet 'n' sour bean curd strips and honey garlic tofu faux Sunday roast. Both joints offer free samples on Saturdays, too.

Across the street, the north market features organic veggies and cut flowers from **Poplar Lane Farm**, certified chicken from **Clement's Poultry**, and organic elk – try their terrific tourtière – from **Second Wind Elk Farm**.

ONE-MAN SHOW

THE FARMER'S ORGANIC MARKET St. George the Martyr Church, John and Stephanie, 647-226-2418

Saturday 8:30 am to 2:30 pm

Note the spelling. For the moment, local organic farmer **Phil Mathewson** is the sole participant in Toronto's longest-running organic market. Expect a narrow but deep range of veggies - green tomatillos, hot peppers, gigantic puff mushrooms - as well as straight-from-the-stream wild perch fillets.

PARKDALE TRIO

PARKDALE COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET 1313 Queen West, at Cowan, 416-516 8401

Saturday 9 am to 2 pm, until October 30

With the atmosphere of a church bake sale, this somewhat disappointing weekly gathering features only two organic merchants (Sosnicki and Plan B) - three if you count the bread sold here made from organic ingredients and baked in Dufferin Grove's uncertified oven.

MOST VENERABLE VENUE

KENSINGTON MARKET Although a relative late starter, Kensington has gone organic in a big way. Spiritual supermarket **Essence of Life** (50 Kensington, at St. Andrew, 416-920-3377) carries a store-length wall of health-conscious cereals, chips and puffs as well as no-oats oatmeal, dairy-free chocolate bars and tubs of satanic seitan wheat meat. Now sharing digs with tropical fruit monger Sanci's, **Kensington Market Organic Ice Cream** (66 Kensington, at Baldwin, 416-835-7781) has expanded its lineup of ices, also. New flavours including rose petal vanilla and spicy anise with black pepper join old favourite masala chai. Bigger

news: they're now available at Whole Foods in Yorkville.

Behind a curbside lavender hedge, funky **4 Life** (257 Augusta, at Nassau, 416-591-6800) is part organic grocer and part organic juice bar, while across the way, enigmatic **Shop 338** carries a small assortment of veg and packaged tofu.

All of the Market is buzzing about the imminent launch of **Stephen Gardner** of Fressen's **Organic Herbivore** at 264 Augusta, a cooperative vegan community kitchen slash bakery offering cooking classes and organic takeout. @

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