

# Harvest of the Month

## Peaches



True wild peaches are only found in China. Unlike the cultivated fruit, the wild fruit is small, sour and very fuzzy.

### Peach Varieties

- Peach varieties can be either clingstone, where the flesh of the fruit clings to the stone, or freestone, where the stone readily twists away from the fruit. Clingstone and freestone peaches are available in both white and yellow varieties.
- Genetically, nectarines differ from peaches by only one recessive gene – the one that makes a peach fuzzy. Nectarines are just smooth peaches.



### Reasons to Eat Peaches:

- Because they're so sweet!
- They are a good source of Vitamin C

#### What is Vitamin C?

A water-soluble vitamin also known as ascorbic acid

Acts as an antioxidant (attacks damaging free radical molecules in the body)

Helps your body make collagen (keeps your gums and muscles healthy)

- They are also a source of Vitamins A, E, B and minerals including potassium, calcium, iron and magnesium.

Washington produced 14,000 tons of peaches in 2010. California produced 817,000 tons, over 50% of peaches grown in the United States.

## All about Peaches

### History

- The peach originated in China 3-4,000 years ago and has special significance in Chinese culture: The peach tree is considered to be the tree of life and peaches are symbols of immortality and unity. Peach blossoms are carried by Chinese brides.
- Peaches traveled west via the silk roads to Persia, earning them the botanical name *Prunus persica*. In Persia, peaches were discovered by Alexander the Great, who mentions half a dozen types, and who introduced them to the Greeks.
- Greece enjoyed the peach, and soon Romans grew and sold them for the modern equivalent of \$4.50 apiece! The Romans called the peach a Persian apple. Spaniards brought peaches to the Americas and the French introduced them to Louisiana. The English took them to their Jamestown and Massachusetts colonies. To this day China remains the largest world producer.

### Other Fun Facts:

- You can ripen peaches by placing them in a brown paper bag for two days.
- The juice from peaches is a wonderful moisturizer, and is found in many cosmetics.
- A peach pit contains hydrocyanic acid, which protects the seed.
- Like the plum and the apricot, the peach is a member of the rose family (*Rosaceae*)
- Peaches are a favorite snacking fruit and cereal fruit, and make wonderful pies, jams and ice cream - a summer favorite. Ripe peaches also freeze well for later use.