**Produce Spotlight on**

**STRAWBERRIES**

**Shopping for Strawberries**

**Strawberries a**re the first locally grown fruit to ripen in June. They are available throughout the month from more than 50 farms in Massachusetts. Strawberries provide vitamin C, fiber, and antioxidants. Vitamin C helps our bodies fight infection and heal wounds.

* Look for firm strawberries with a natural shine, rich red color, and sweet smell. The leafy green caps should be attached and look fresh.
* Avoid dull, shriveled, mushy, or moldy berries.
* The berry size does not matter. Small berries have great flavor.

**Storage and Preparation**

* Refrigerate unwashed strawberries in a perforated container. For the best flavor and texture, plan to eat or freeze strawberries within three days.
* Before eating, gently wash with cool running water and drain. Remove the leafy caps by twisting or cutting them off.
* For longer storage, freeze cleaned, whole berries on a baking sheet. When firm, transfer the berries to a freezer bag or container. Label and date. For the best quality, use the berries within a year.

**Strawberry Math**

1 pound of whole strawberries =

4 cups of whole berries (1 quart)

3 cups of sliced berries

1 3/4 cups of mashed berries

* Strawberries can be made into a jam or jelly and preserved by canning for year-long enjoyment.

**Cooking with Strawberries**

* Make a smoothie for a delicious breakfast or snack. Put strawberries, low-fat yogurt, and a handful of ice into your blender and whip it up.
* Create a salad with sliced strawberries, baby spinach, and shallots and dress with a vinaigrette dressing.
* Add strawberries to cooked oatmeal, breakfast cereal, or a fruit salad.
* Try making a strawberry and rhubarb pie.

**Using Locally Grown Produce**

Visit the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program’s website featuring recipes using fruits and vegetables. To locate places to buy local produce, visit [www.mass.gov/massgrown.](http://www.mass.gov/massgrown.)

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