

# CSA News

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## Fun Facts About Strawberries

- A strawberry has, on average, 200 seeds
- If all the strawberries produced in California, in one year, were laid berry to berry, they'd wrap around the world 15 times
- Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside. It is argued that for this reason, it cannot be considered a real berry, since berries carry seeds on the inside
- Ninety-four percent of U.S. households consume strawberries at least once a year
- Strawberries often gain top positions in surveys as the favorite fruit: in 2007 over 53 percent of seven to nine-year-olds picked strawberries as their favorite fruit
- A French noblewoman at the time of Napoleon,

Madame Tallien, used to bathe regularly in strawberry juice, using 22 pounds per basin. She didn't bathe daily though

- Strawberries have a long-dated history of medical uses. The Romans used them to alleviate symptoms of fainting, kidney stones, inflammation, diseases of the blood, liver and spleen, throat infections, bad breath, attacks of gout, melancholy and fever.
- The etymology of the name "strawberry" is still largely unproven: some argue that they were named in the nineteenth-century by English children who picked the berries, strung them on grass straws and sold them as "Straws of berries". Others theorize that the name was derived from the nineteenth-century practice of placing straw

around the growing berry plants to protect the ripening fruit (still done today!)

- Charles V of France ordered, in the 14th century, that twelve hundred strawberry plants be grown in the Royal Gardens of the Louvre
- Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in spring
- Strawberries were a symbol of perfection and love: for instance, folklore says that if you split a double strawberry in half and share it with a member of the opposite sex, you'll soon fall in love. Medieval stonemasons carved strawberry designs on altars and around the tops of pillars in sacred places such as churches, as a symbol of perfection.



**Madame Tallien - She used to bathe in strawberry juice**

As an aside: Madame Tallien both witnessed and participated in the dramatic events of 1789 to 1804, including the fall of the French monarchy, the French Revolution, the birth of a new republic, and the declaration of the Empire.

## Lettuce has some history too!!

Lettuce has been cultivated for more than 2,500 years. The Romans grew many varieties, and it became widely appreciated in Asia and Europe. In the United States, an 1885 agricultural report listed no fewer than 87 varieties of lettuce. (You have 6 different

types in your bag today!) Lettuce aids digestion and promotes liver health. It can also reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and cataracts. Other research shows it helps to reduce the risk of cancer and may ease nervous insomnia.

However, if iceberg is the only type of lettuce you eat, you are choosing the least-nutritious member of a family of nutritional champions. Any other lettuce or leafy green vegetable would be a better choice. So enjoy the variety of lettuce in your CSA bag this week!

## Nebraska Produce Availability Chart

This chart is based on the average harvest seasons of locally grown produce.

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	October
<b>Fruit</b>							
Apples							
Grapes							
Blackberries							
Raspberries							
Strawberries							
<b>Vegetables</b>							
Asparagus							
Beets							
broccoli							
Cabbage							
Carrots							
Cucumbers							
Eggplant							
Garlic							
Green Beans							
Gourds							
Herbs							
Lettuce							
Muskmelon							
Onions							
Peas							
Peppers							
Potatoes							
Pumpkins							
Rhubarb							
Spinach							
Squash							
Sweet corn							
Tomatoes							
Tumips							
Radishes							
Watermelon							
Zucchini							

## Think outside the salad with some Lettuce Soup

### Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 2 Tablespoons flour
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 bouillon cubes
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups light cream or whole milk

- 2 cups chopped Lettuce

### Directions:

Saute' onion in butter. Blend in flour. Add water gradually, stirring constantly. Add bouillon cubes and seasonings. (Replace water and bouillon with 2 cups chicken broth if desired.)

Cook for 10 minutes. Add cream and lettuce. Heat through.

### Variation:

Saute' 8 cups chopped lettuce with the onions, about 3 minutes. Omit flour. Add everything but cream and simmer 5 minutes. Cool slightly then

puree in a blender. Return soup to the kettle and add cream. Heat through.



## For something different with your Strawberries try: Panna Cotta with Fresh Strawberries and Balsamic Syrup

### Ingredients

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 cup superfine sugar
- 1 vanilla bean
- 3 strips lemon peel
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 1/4 teaspoons powdered gelatin
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 cup creme fraiche, room temperature

- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- 2 tablespoons high-quality balsamic vinegar

### Directions

1. Put the milk, cream, and sugar in a pot; set over medium heat. Split and scrape the vanilla bean seeds into the pot and add lemon peel. Bring to a simmer, then shut off heat and cover with a lid. Set aside to steep for 15 to 20 minutes.

2. While the mixture is steeping, combine the lemon juice and gelatin in a bowl, whisking constantly to avoid lumps.

Take four 6-ounce ramekins and spray with nonstick spray to evenly coat the insides.

3. Put the creme fraiche in a large mixing bowl. Pass the cooled cream mixture through a sieve into the bowl and discard the vanilla bean and lemon peel in the sieve. Gently whisk to combine the mixture. Distribute evenly among ramekins, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight, until they are set.

4. When set, arrange sliced strawberries on top of each serving and drizzle with balsamic vinegar.



## Fresh Strawberry Dressing

### Ingredients

- 1 cup strawberries, (6 large berries), rinsed, hulled and sliced
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons almond oil, (see Note) or canola oil

### Directions

1. Place strawberries, vinegar, pepper, sugar and salt in a blender or food processor;

process until pureed, stopping once or twice to scrape down the sides. Add oil and process until smooth.

### Tips:

Note: Almond oil is an unrefined oil pressed from almonds. You can find it in many supermarkets and natural-foods stores. Store it in the refrigerator.

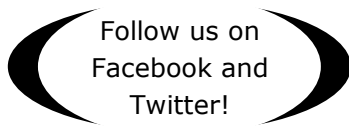


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Omaha's indoor  
farmers market



**Just a Note.....**

We wanted to make a few simple reminders: If you for some reason will not be in for your bag, please give us a call ahead of time. If time gets away from you and you just don't make it in and had planned on making it in, if you call we will keep your bag. However, if for some reason you don't show and don't call, we will donate your bag to the local food pantry so that the fresh food doesn't go to waste.

Please don't forget your bags. If you do not have your bag returned to us by Thursday before the next pick up, we will have to charge \$5 for a new one.

If you have not paid for you full season of the CSA, we would like to remind you that the next 5 week payment will be due on or before the 4th of June.

Now is the time to change or add on additional add-on's as well. If you didn't sign up for the add on for the whole time, please let us know if you would like to continue the add-on's with your bags.

**Tomatoes in the News!!!**

Upon picking up the Omaha World Herald on Friday, May 28th you may have noticed a picture of some fine looking tomatoes from our very own Garden Fresh Vegetables.

By the photo was an interesting article about the struggle between local and national food producers. If you haven't read it we would suggest you check it out at : [www.omaha.com](http://www.omaha.com) The title of the article was "Local food push ripe for debate" (very clever).

What interested us most about the article, however, was the picture. Many of you may not know that those are the hands of our very own John McGuire, the nice gentleman who hands so many of you your CSA bags every week.

In his spirit of generosity he



told the Omaha World Herald he would "wave his usual hand modeling fee"

Good for you, John. Way to promote local foods without exploiting them for monetary gain.

So when you see John next

week after picking up your bag, be sure to give him a shout out and say "nice modeling".

We are proud of you, John!

-your Tomāto Tomāto friends