



History, Heritage and Healthy

Novi's farmers market expands to a second day, location

By RoseAna Twitchell

From pavement to patchwork, the Novi All Seasons Market becomes the fabric of the community where history, heritage and healthy converge -- transforming a parking lot into a cultural quilt filled with sensory stimulation of color, melody, aroma, texture and flavor.

In an effort to best serve Novi residents, the city and Michigan State University Extension Tollgate Education Farm have partnered to host two farmers markets at two locations this season. The Saturday market is held at the Novi Civic Center Campus at 45175 Ten Mile Road from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and the Wednesday market is held at the MSU Extension Tollgate Education Farm at 28115 Meadowbrook Road from 4-7 p.m. Both markets run into October.

"Consumers visit farmers markets for a myriad of reasons; from wanting the freshest possible produce to having a relationship with the farmer that grew the food. Shopping at a local farmers market reduces environmental impact, cost, and shortens the food chain. Patrons can literally purchase food at its source," said Alan Jaros, education director at MSU Tollgate.

HISTORY

So what is a "farmers market"? While many definitions - and perceptions - exist, farmers markets are commonly defined as a group of stalls with farmers and other vendors selling direct to consumers.

While many farmers markets are designed to cater to the needs and pace of the 21st century, they are deep-rooted on the principle of providing access to locally-produced foods while at the same time spurring entrepreneurialism. Michigan is currently home to more than 300 farmers markets. That number has grown significantly since 2001, when about only 90 existed.

HERITAGE

As you stroll through the Novi All Seasons Market, you experience local, regional and international flair right in your own back yard. From the vendors, you learn the stories about the passion behind their product and connect with the origin of your food. The produce and value added foods (VAF) such as eggs, meats, baked goods, cheese, coffee/tea, honey, grains, sauces, confections and etc. are prepared by the hands and from the hearts of each vendor so you can bring them home to share with your family and friends.

HEALTHY

If you made a New Year's resolution to "eat healthier", it doesn't get any easier - or closer - than the Novi All Seasons Market. Produce is in peak season. Whether you are a novice in the kitchen, a trendy foodie or thrive on culinary triumph, discover the pleasure and simplicity of cooking with fresh ingredients. Don't be intimidated -

challenge yourself to look beyond slight imperfections and learn about a fruit, vegetable or food you're not familiar with.

Vendors welcome your curiosity and enjoy sharing an item's origin or guidelines for preparation and preservation to maximize the product's benefits and your dollars to meet your expectations.

The Novi All Seasons Market is proud to showcase Michigan farmers that base their operations on the Michigan growing season, providing you the best quality and value. Shopping at the farmers market is an experience you create each time you attend. You have an opportunity to learn and to share. By including your children, neighbors and house guests you impart valuable life skills upon them as well. Each farmers market is unique to its community, and like a garden, with patience and nurturing, it will grow.

For a list of current events, follow the market on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NoviFarmersMarket. For more information about shopping, vendor and sponsorship opportunities call (248) 347-0400 or email rtwitchell@cityofnovi.org.

RoseAna Twitchell is the market manager for the Novi All Seasons Market. She is a certified farmers market manager and serves on the Marketing and Membership Committee for the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA). She welcomes your feedback at rtwitchell@cityofnovi.org.