

Eckert's sweet and juicy peaches have long been a summer favorite. The secret lies in tree-ripening. Peaches do not get any sweeter once they are picked. Eckert's peaches are left on the tree to increase their sugar content. Eckert's lets their peaches ripen to maximum sweetness before we harvest.

Tree-ripened peaches need additional ripening once purchased to increase their softness and juiciness. Place peaches in a paper bag, and set a room temperature for 2-3 days. Do not refrigerate unripe peaches as this inhibits ripening and causes the fruit to become dry, mealy, and flavorless. Once peaches are ripe, they can be refrigerated from 5-7 days.

Peaches are a stone fruit, relative of apricots and nectarines. Two main types exist: clingstone and freestone. Clingstone peaches are the earliest ripening peaches, and are named for the flesh that will not pull away from the pit. Firm clingstones are recommended for canning. Since they cannot be pitted, slice or quarter them making cuts with a paring knife toward the center and around the pit. Then lift out each slice. The freestone varieties ripen a little later and are the most common varieties found in markets. To pit a freestone peach, cut it lengthwise into halves around the pit. Twist the halves in opposite directions to separate them. Remove the pit with the tip of a knife. Since the pit can be easily removed, this peach is recommended for fresh eating. A peach's appearance does not indicate if it is a clingstone or freestone, so ask an Eckert team member for additional assistance.

When selecting peaches, choose slightly firm and plump peaches that yield somewhat to pressure. Blushes are an indicator of the variety of peach, but not its ripening status.

Peaches peel more easily if placed in boiling water for 1-2 minutes and then placed into ice water for a minute. The skins slip off easily. Cut peaches discolor or turn brown quickly when exposed to the air. To help prevent this - eat immediately once sliced or use powdered produce protector. Follow directions on the container.

Fun Peach Trivia

Eckert's peach trees are not allowed to bear fruit until they are 3-years old. Every year blooms are removed. This allows the tree to put its vigor into establishing a good root system.

The buds for next year's peaches are formed in June and July of the previous year. Even before the peaches are picked off the trees!

When Measuring Peaches:

1 pound = 3 medium-size peaches = 2 cups sliced peaches

Quick and Easy Recipe: Mix to taste some of your homemade peach preserves or Eckert's preserves with cream cheese; spread on bagels.



Freezing Peaches with Syrup

Make syrup a day ahead, cover & refrigerate.

4 cups water

1 cup sugar

Bring to a boil then cool. Add 1 tsp produce protector such as Fruit Fresh or Fruit Fresh Preserve to each cup of syrup before using.

Peel Peaches. Cut peaches in halves, quarters, or slices. Do not cut slices too thin. As you peel, place prepared peaches in a large bowl of ice water with 3 tsp. Produce Protector to prevent browning.

Put peaches in plastic or glass freezer containers. Add cold syrup to within 1/2 to 3/4 inch from the top of the container.

Place small pieces of crumpled waxed paper on top of fruit to keep the fruit under the syrup before you close the container. This also prevents browning.

Dry Sugar Pack

Add 2/3 cup sugar to 4-6 cups of sliced peaches. Mix well and add 1 tsp. Produce Protector per 4 cups of fruit. Label and freeze immediately.

Freezing Peaches Without Sugar

Peel and slice peaches. Submerge peach slices in a bath of water and produce protector to prevent browning. Arrange slices on a cookie sheet lined with waxed paper. Freeze. Remove from freezer and place slices in a freezer bag. Return peaches to the freezer. These slices are great for fruit salads!

Eckert's Greens with Honey-Drizzled Peaches

1/4 cup finely chopped toasted pecans

1/2 tsp kosher salt, divided

Freshly ground pepper to taste

1 4-oz log goat cheese

6 cups mixed field greens

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

4 Eckert's firm peaches, halved and pitted

4 tbsp Eckert's Pure Honey

Place pecans in a shallow dish. Season with 1/4 tsp salt and pepper. Roll goat cheese log in the pecans to coat. Refrigerate the log until firm, if necessary, then cut into 8 rounds. Place greens in a medium bowl. Add oil, lemon zest and juice and toss to coat; season with the remaining 1/4 tsp salt and pepper. Divide the greens among 4 shallow bowls. Nestle 2 peach halves into each portion of greens, top each half with a round of pecan-crusting goat cheese and drizzle each salad with 1 tbsp honey