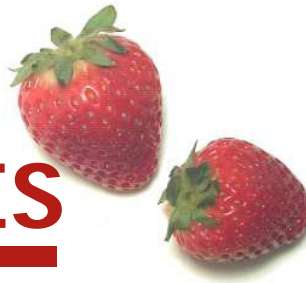


Eckert's STRAWBERRIES



When Measuring Strawberries:

1 1/2 pounds = 2 pints or 1 quart
1 quart = 6 1/2 cups whole berries
1 quart = 4 1/2 cups sliced berries
1 quart = 3 1/3 cups pureed berries
1 cup = 4 ounces

There is nothing like a big, red and juicy strawberry, fresh off an Eckert plant. Eckert's has been growing strawberries at the Belleville farm for over 50 years. We usually expect to harvest our strawberries in mid May, although the unpredictable weather always serves as the determining factor. It is the first fruit season of the year, and unfortunately also the shortest, due to mother nature of course, as well as the high demand for this versatile and popular berry.

Not only do these attractive and sweet berries make excellent additions to a variety of dishes and desserts, but they are also very nutritious. Ounce for ounce, strawberries have more Vitamin C than any type of citrus fruit. Eight strawberries will provide 140% of the recommended daily intake of Vitamin C for kids. One cup of strawberries yields 94 mg of Vitamin C, 45 mg of Potassium, 23 mg of Calcium, 4 grams Fiber and contains only 50 calories!

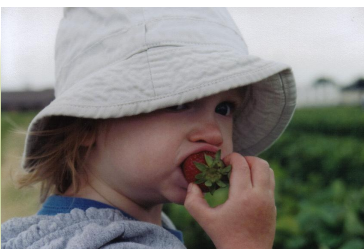
Look for bright red strawberries, with the green caps still in place. When these caps are removed, chemicals are released that deplete Vitamin C. Make sure mold is not present on any of the strawberries. Once one berry grows mold, the other berries have been exposed to invisible spores, that will eventually lead to the contamination of the whole container.

Use strawberries as soon as possible after they are purchased. It is important to loosely cover unwashed berries with plastic wrap. Make sure to keep strawberries in the coldest part of your refrigerator.

When you are ready to use the strawberries, rinse them in a colander and remove green stem caps (hull). Do not let the berries soak, for it minimizes both color and sweetness.

Fun Strawberry Trivia:

The strawberry is the only fruit with seeds on the outside of the fruit. On average there are 200 seeds on a strawberry.



FREEZE PREPARED BERRIES

Berries in Freezer Bags

Sprinkle sugar over berries, using two-thirds to three-fourths cup sugar for each quart of fruit. Gently turn berries over and over until the sugar is thoroughly dissolved before packing in food storage bags. This prevents freezer burn.

Syrup Pack

Make a syrup using one and one-fourth cups water to each cup of sugar. Dissolve the sugar in either cold or hot water; if hot water is used, be sure to chill the syrup before using.

Pectin Syrup

Combine one box (1.75 oz) powdered pectin with one cup of water in a sauce pan; stir and boil for one minute. Stir in one-half cup sugar and dissolve. Remove from stove and add enough cold water to make two cups syrup; chill the mixture before using. (This amount should coat about 16 pints of berries).

Unsweetened Pack

Mix 1 teaspoon of powdered Fruit Fresh with 1 cup of water. Pour liquid over whole or sliced fresh strawberries to cover.

**Recommended storage time for frozen strawberries is 6-8 months.

Sweet Strawberry Bruschetta

4 slices Eckert's Fresh Bread, cut into 1/2 - 3/4 inch slices
6 tbsp light brown sugar
1 tsp grated lemon zest
2 tsp lemon juice
4 cups diced hulled Eckert's Strawberries
4 tbsp cream cheese, fresh goat cheese or marscarpone, softened
4 tbsp Eckert's honey

Toast both sides of bread. Set aside. Heat 10-in skillet over high heat. Add brown sugar, lemon zest and juice. Cook stirring continuously until sugar melts and mixture begins to bubble, about 1 to 2 minutes. Add strawberries and stir until strawberry juice begins to release, about 30 seconds. Remove from heat. Spread 1 tbsp soften cheese on each piece of toasted French bread. Top with warm berries. Drizzle with honey.