

MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

This past Saturday at the Farmers' Market began on a cool but sunny day, which warmed as the day went on.

Perhaps because of the cool weather, we were off to a slow start, but gradually things improved.

Coffee sales were brisk, as they usually are in the morning.

Customers have noticed that we no longer have Green River Coffee at the Market as Tricia has moved to Prince Edward County. We miss her and wish her well in her new home.

Cathy, of Catharina's Kitchen, has now added coffee to her menu, along with tea and hot chocolate. So, together with the coffee at Jan's Country Pantry, there should be enough coffee for everyone.

While it is still May and very early in the growing season, there is quite a lot of choice already at the Market. Of course, we have an abundance of wonderful, fresh asparagus and rhubarb available. I saw big heads of lettuce, fiddleheads, radishes and wintered over root vegetables and apples.

Our new farmer, Jared Simpson, has the most beautiful heirloom tomatoes of many varieties as well as heirloom carrots of many colours. One of my favourite ways to serve the heirloom tomatoes is to mix slices of differently coloured tomatoes on a plate, sprinkle with salt and pepper, drizzle with a good olive oil and balsamic vinegar and top with goat cheese and a chiffonade of fresh basil.

It looks good enough to eat!

Let me now introduce you to Jared, our newest farmer.

Jared is a seventh generation farmer from Stouffville (Ballantrae).

The farm has been in the family since 1845.

In 1983, Jared's father, Larry, started Simpson Produce, and began specializing in growing potatoes.

Simpson Produce supplies potatoes to restaurants, wholesalers and grocery stores all year round and Jared works as the Sales/Delivery Manager.

During the summer, Jared enjoys being a vendor at a few farmers' markets and has partnered with his brother-in-law, Shaun Bernier. Together, they grow and sell potatoes, sweet corn, broccoli, cauliflower, beans, lettuce, kale, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, onions, beets, and squash exclusively for their farmers' markets.

You can look forward to more of these wonderful vegetables later in the season, nearing July, when they are ready to harvest.

Growing a variety of vegetables specifically for farmers' markets is what started Simpson Family Farm, a sister company to Simpson Produce.

While this is Jared's first year at the Aurora Farmers' Market, he and other family members were vendors at the Stouffville Country Market for over 35 years until it closed last year.

Ever since Jared can remember, farming has been a part of his life. Apparently, 'tractor' and 'farm' were among his first words. His best memories as a child were helping at the market, taking rides on the tractors with his dad and helping to plant his own vegetables for his small stand at the farm.

Jared is married to Nikki and they have a daughter named Jessa, now two years old. In his spare time, Jared enjoys spending time with his family, travelling, and his favourite sports of hockey and baseball. He also enjoys fellowship with a men's Church group and looks forward to volunteering with the youth program in the fall. You can visit his booth on Wells Street near Melcalfe.

See you at the Market!