



# GRIST FOR THE MILL

WATERCOLOR BY MARILYN WALSH

It's summer! Back and front yard gardens, farmers' markets, farmstands are brimming with glorious colors of fat fruits and veggies. My husband and I don't go to supermarkets much, not at any time of year. All our produce comes from farmers' markets and roadside farms. I don't get it when people claim farmstand or farmers' market fruits and veggies, even those grown organically, cost more than supermarket veggies. It seems to me they pay me.

I get less waste. I've learned thrift from farmers' markets, from those who sell and shop there, how to use every last basil leaf, how fresh garlic drips its juice from the press and a couple of cloves go so much farther. A week's worth of eating comes in the uniform ripeness and the long shelf life that result from recent, often same-day harvest.

I get more flavor. Try a taste/scent test, even blind: one supermarket tomato and one from the farmers' market—or one of anything. Ripeness is all—ripeness and recency of harvest and genes not manipulated for transport.

Farmers' market veggies pay me in their magnanimous variety, always some never before seen, and they therefore feed my sense of adventure: white globe eggplant, a kazillion peppers, the gnarly globes of some heirloom tomatoes.

Stories from the growers, from whence the seed came, how the fruits and veggies taste this week compared to last or next, how to cook, accompany, serve them, even the latest on farm and family life come when I ask.

Plus we support our local growers and our local economy.

Relationship, adventure, knowledge and entertainment, taste and sight and scent, and, yes, economy. Even if you have a backyard garden, we highly recommend a visit or two per week to farmers' markets and farmstands. See our inside back cover for a list of farmers' markets.

It's summer! Enjoy.

Candace Byrne  
Editor, *Edible Shasta-Butte*