



# HARRIS SEEDS



## EDITOR'S NOTES Macy Brady

Along with this issue you will find a sign-up sheet for our new 2007 catalogs. If you or your vendors would like copies of any of our catalogs, please return the sign-up sheet to us here at Harris Seeds or email us your requests.

Just as a reminder: This newsletter can be found on our website at [www.harriseseeds.com](http://www.harriseseeds.com). You can look at archived issues here, and sign-up to receive the newsletter via e-mail!

## MARKET SPOTLIGHT Macy Brady



### Fritz May Market Manager, Fairport, NY

Thirty-one years ago a woman named Pat Knapp founded the Fairport Farmers' Market. She wanted a place where locals could find fresh fruits and vegetables, and through hard work and dedication, the Fairport Farmers' Market came to be.

For the past thirteen years Fritz May has carried the torch managing one of the most thriving markets in Upstate NY. Held on Saturday mornings from 7am – 12 noon located on South Main St, the market now hosts approximately 63 spaces during peak season, drawing over 2,000 visitors per week.

The market offers a wide diversity of home grown, home made products. With Organic representation from growers like Circle B Organic Farms to handcrafted Cheese Makers Yancey's Fancy, repeat award winner at the New York State Fair, attendees are bound to leave the market with goodies the whole family will enjoy.



## DISPLAY IDEAS Sue Mears

### Target the Little Guys

Next time you're at the Market, look around with a new perspective for identifying customers. **There's a large untapped reservoir of potential business right in front of you, just below table height: the children and pets accompanying your traditional buyers.**

Children often accompany their parents on shopping expeditions to the Market, and there's frequently nothing that a child can purchase with his own money. Make it a goal to **have one or two appealing items for kids in your stall, and price them with an eye toward paying for them with "pocket money."** Single cookies, cut flowers by the stem, candy, candles – these can all be priced so that children can buy them. Remember that, if children enjoy shopping at the Market, their parents are more likely to shop there regularly.

And pets – while pets may not be allowed at your Market, their owners are certainly encouraged to shop there! I see vendors at almost every Market I visit who provide pet treats, pet toys, even pet beds and domiciles. **A large percentage of the shoppers at Farmers' Markets are pet owners, so be sure to provide products for them to purchase.**



## CREATE YOUR OWN EVENT Mike Diesel

### International Rutabaga Curling Championship

Rutabaga Curling originated at the Ithaca, NY Farmers' Market on a cold, December day in 1997. With few customers, the vendors found themselves very chilly and perhaps more than a little bit bored. What began, with these vendors rolling their wares down the main aisle of the market to stay warm and alleviate boredom, has turned into a **huge phenomenon!!** Fans and contestants, young and old, from far and wide gather each December in Ithaca to seek fame or simply to root for this largely ignored and neglected vegetable.



**The rutabaga, thought to have evolved from a cross between a wild cabbage and a turnip, thrive best in colder climates.** This great-tasting vegetable remains rather uncommon with annual, per capita consumption below one pound – only 3 out of 10,000 high school students correctly identified it in a vegetable line-up.

**In 2005, there were 120 athletes and massive amounts of cheering fans, dressed in warm, but colorful attire, at this annual competition.** Encourage your fellow vendors and yourself to be creative, to lure customers into your market during your slow times and have some fun!!!! **Innovation, imagination and the need for excitement has turned this unpopular vegetable into the centerpiece of a HUGE EVENT at the Ithaca Farmers' Market in FROSTY-COLD DECEMBER, in Upstate NY.**



## RESOURCE LINKS Tim Lovier

The New Farmers' Market, Courum, Rozenweig & Gibson. New World Publishing. Auburn, CA 95602. 2001. This must-have resource for growers covers the latest tips and trends from leading-edge sellers, managers and market planners all over the country.



**PROBLEM SOLVERS' CORNER**

**Macy Brady**

**Harvesting and Handling Produce**

In the wake of most recent events of a nationwide E. coli outbreak linked to bagged spinach, it is especially important to be aware of food safety from harvest to food preparation. Although purchasing fresh produce directly from the growers greatly reduces the chance of food borne illness, it is especially important to take all precautions.

1. Treat produce as if you were going to prepare it for yourself.
2. **Before you begin working, always wash hands with hot soapy water and again after using the toilet.**
3. Scrub and wash produce that has contacted soil to remove dirt.
4. **Clean and sanitize equipment and surfaces that are used to handle produce.**
5. Use clean dishes and utensils for food preparation.
6. **Store food at proper temperatures.**
7. Keep garbage containers covered.
8. **Keep raw foods separate from prepared.**
9. Label all foods.

**NEW GOURD MIX!**

**11822-00-02 Autumn Wings Blend**



**100 Days.** Autumn Wings is a very unique series that offers many colors and patterns on fruit that have wings on the bulb end. This formulated mix includes approximately 50% medium size wing gourds and 25% each of small wings and large wings. All the sizes have a winged bulb that is approximately 2.5-3" in diameter. The small size has a 4 - 5" long neck; the medium size has a 6" long neck and the large size has a 12" long neck and many of the fruit will also have warts on them. **Please note:** Plant this mix early so that the gourds can fully mature before harvest. Immature wings on the gourds can be easily damaged and rot.

1 oz. \$13.15; ¼ lb. \$36.75, 1 lb. \$110.25; 5 lbs. @ \$105.75/lb.

**VALUE ADDED**

**Sue Mears**

**THINK small FOR LARGE SALES**

With the continuing trend toward smaller households, it's time to **consider selling smaller at the Market.**

Consider packaging your produce in smaller containers. Three tomatoes, four zucchinis, half a pint of cherry tomatoes – that may be all that any one- or two-person household will want for the week. Even single items of produce will have appeal: onions, winter squash, garlic, and peppers may sell better for you if priced by the "each".

Also consider growing smaller produce. We see a trend toward the "single serving" vegetable with our growers, and this indicates that's what they're selling well at the Market. Watermelons (Solitaire), cantaloupe (Lil' Loupe), tomatoes (Plum Crimson), even sweet corn (Mr. Mini Mirai) are all in increasing demand with Farmers Market growers. Even pumpkins in the small-to-midsize range (Mystic Plus and Magic Lantern) are in more demand every year.



So **make it convenient for smaller households to purchase their produce from you, and selling smaller will produce larger sales at your stall.**

**MARKET TRENDS**

**Tim Lovier**

**The Organic Market**

As Organic representation at local Farmers' Markets has become more common place, it's important to look at few of the pros and cons that are faced:

**PROS**

**Growing market** - According to the Food Marketing Institute more than half of Americans buy organic food at least once a month.

**In the News** - Organic foods are in the news creating more awareness.

**Cost** - People are willing to pay more for organic produce.

**Another choice** - The greater variety of produce and choices available to consumers will result in more people attending your farmers' market.

**CONS**

**Appearance** – Due to the restrictions on using pesticides organic produce can have a less than perfect appearance compared to conventional produce.

**Cost** – Organic produce can cost more than some customers are willing to pay due to the increased labor during production and potentially lower yields.