

# Farm Fresh

Vendors at The Summit All Seasons Market grow and sell fresh, sustainable products



By Madeline Awad & Josh Devine

Website Editors In Chief

Amish farms. Wisconsin. Jars of honey. A pumpkin patch. These seemingly random and unrelated things all intersect in one place: The Summit All Seasons Market. The market magically intertwines all aspects of farm life, offering everything from locally sourced produce to fresh-baked pies - all of which encapsulate the nature of small-scale agriculture. This Kirkwood market is a family-run St. Louis hallmark and hub for locals looking to dive deeper into rural life.

“My grandma started The Summit Fresh Produce Market back in 1978,” Manager Leah Mitchell said. “She just had her own little vendor booth and was really good at selling and making connections so it grew into what it is now.”

Once the market began to expand, connections with local

farmers became a vital part of keeping the shelves stocked. The market focuses on obtaining produce primarily in channels outside big box stores and making connections on the local level.

“We have local farms that bring us a majority of our produce,” Produce Aid Brady Stark said. “They pull it right in the back, and we unload it. Mostly Amish farms or local co-ops that we just get on the phone with. We’ve worked with them for years. They bring their trucks and trailers, unload and we receive fresh local produce. We get deliveries about twice a week.”

These local connections allow the market to thrive throughout the year. As demand for products continues to flourish, they are always looking for new ways to meet and partner with fresh-grown farms. A culture has developed among local farmers, ensuring everyone can sell their products and benefit from the market.

“A handful of vendors supply a variety of products year-round

“We have a lot of Amish farmers that we get things from here locally in Missouri and developed a network of local farmers who get us the best.”

Brady Stark  
Produce Aid

and keep our local produce rotating,” Stark said. “Our market spreads through word of mouth and years of experience. The farmers also know what they’re doing and will reach out with their products. Over time, you can find everything you can think of locally.”

The Summit All Seasons Market has evolved to become a staple in the St. Louis Community. Over the seasons, it attracts students, such as Molly Shipley (11), to its many different attractions and offerings throughout the year.

“I love going to the market to look at the new things that they put out,” Shipley said. “My family buys our Christmas tree and pumpkins from there every year. It’s a fun tradition that I hold close to my heart. It’s really cool to see how they change over the year.”

In the modern world, concerns about unsanitary product conditions and harmful toxins on produce are ever-growing. How-

ever, The Summit Market believes fresh produce should be accessible to all.

“We source from nearby farms as much as possible,” Mitchell said. “Since COVID-19, people prefer cleaner, less processed food. We aim for the most organically grown produce, and while it’s not always easy, we prioritize local options.”

While industrial warehouse stores import their produce globally, The Summit year-round market offers a refreshing and community-oriented alternative, providing a more personal shopping experience.

**“It’s really interesting to know where your food is coming from. My mom and I try to go to the market around once a month to stock up on their fresh produce.”**

Molly Shipley  
(11)

With the mass amount of product that they bring in, The Summit Market has refined its system to ensure farm produce stays healthy and sustainable.

“It’s really difficult [to keep everything fresh],” Stark said. “We’ve got two walk-in coolers and several sheds in the back of the market for produce that doesn’t want to be too cold overnight. When it gets really cold, we cover some things to protect them. Each morning, we set everything up, creating organized piles of food to showcase it. Then, at the end of the day, we carefully store it all back to ensure everything remains in top condition.”

The market attracts people from all over the St. Louis area, offering a unique chance to immerse themselves in nature at its finest. Produce, bakery items and freshly preserved jars are meticulously inspected hourly for quality. It is a vibrant place to indulge and truly appreciate the local farm presence, holding deep sentimental value for the Mitchell family.

“My grandma passed the business to my dad and my aunt, and our family legacy has been thriving ever since,” Mitchell said. “It’s a testament to our commitment and hard work. Every year, [the market] expands and evolves, bringing fresh-grown produce to as many people as we can. We are dedicated to strengthening our community and ensuring everyone has access to the highest quality food that reflects our business and values.”



**TOP:** A vibrant assortment of pumpkins and gourds spread across a farm stand. With the arrival of colder autumn weather, seasonal produce like squash, pumpkins and apples gradually replaced summer fruits and vegetables. “We get stuff from all over the place, and just know a lot of different farmers around the country who get us the best,” Produce Aid Brady Stark said.

**MIDDLE:** The market is adorned with vibrant jars of pickles, jams and relishes line the shelves at the market, coming from the rich harvest of preserved local produce. The market prides itself on selling products from trusted farms and vendors in the community. “We build the relationship and see how things go first,” Manager Leah Mitchell said.

**BOTTOM:** Rows of produce, freshly picked from local orchards, line up ready for customers. As the local growing season ends, fall produce like peppers and tomatoes become more prominent. “When it gets colder in the fall, we do more local pumpkins and mums and jarred goods, and our pies are local,” Stark said. (Photos by Madeline Awad)

## Locally Sourced

The Summit All Seasons market imports fresh produce year-round



### Strawberries

Fresh strawberries are imported each week from an Amish farm in rural Missouri. They are kept in moisture-wicking paper mache cartons that maintain high quality.



### Asparagus

Upon arrival at the market, asparagus is bundled and stored refrigerated or on ice. Though usually a seasonal vegetable, this market stocks it year-round, ensuring it stays in excellent condition.



### Peppers

Peppers are a year-round staple in The Summit All Seasons Market. Coming from St. Louis Amish farms and co-ops, the peppers are delivered weekly by the crate.

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