

DECEMBER

Sprouts in all formats (raw, prepared and on the stalk) are in high demand. Kalettes, a cross between Brussel sprouts and kale, has just arrived and is in season.

January King cabbage is another brassica on hand, along with British kohlrabi. Broccoli tends to be Spanish.

For fruit, leafy Clems lead the pack amongst the citrus. But there's also a lot of intriguing and unusual hybrids. For example, are Moroccan-grown finger limes, Yuzu Lemons and Italian Bergamots. Not long now until the first blood oranges.

Don't forget English apples and pears, which are on excellent form and good value.

It's a great time for Lychees and pomegranates and figs are now edging over to the Southern Hemisphere.

The season for Yorkshire forced rhubarb will start at the end of the month or early January. In the meantime, you'll find Dutch.

Along with spuds, it's a fine time for roots like Jerusalem artichokes, celeriac, heritage carrots, orange and heritage Chantanay, baby parsnips (Piccolo Parsnip) and lovely bunched British beetroot.

From unusual veg you can get Oca - a colourful, delicious alternative to regular potatoes and yams.

From the Continent, you'll also find chervil root, salsify and crosnes, along with puntarella, cime di rapa, artichokes, fennel, peppers, walnuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts and winter tomatoes such as jet-black Camone.

Spanish Garlic is a good buy; you can also get purple French garlic from Lautrec. Wet garlic is also available. Radicchio is building up speed. Not much Tardivo about yet, but Castelfranco and Trevis are easy to source.

By Tom Moggach (on behalf of Kirby's Fresh Produce)

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T: 0207 622 4494 **F:** 0207 720 5352 **E:** info@kirbysproduce.com **W:** www.kirbysproduce.com