

MAY

A fantastic time of the year, with the UK season now underway. Abundant asparagus – including purple, white and wild. Wild garlic is now in flower – a favourite garnish for many chefs. Other foraged highlights include elderflower and nettles.

The European stone fruit season has just begun, bringing apricots, plums and cherries. Nectarines typically follow a week or two after the first peaches.

Soft fruit includes the first English strawberries, Gariguettes, Mara Des Bois, Fraise Des Bois and raspberries from across the Channel. Lovely melons, too, including watermelons and French Charentais.

Mangoes – specifically Indian Alphonso and Kesar and Kent from Brazil – are another favourite at the start of May. This is also the season for the underrated loquat – a.k.a. nispero – from Spain.

Peas and broad beans are still from southern Europe. Expect a vast range of tomatoes, too: some grown outdoors in soil; others drip-fed in the greenhouse.

For salad crops, this is the end of the season for the Italian radicchios. UK lettuces soon ready – baby leaf already on the Market.

New potatoes are here in volumes, including Jersey Royals and Cornish.

Speciality crops include fresh green almonds and sour plums – a favourite snack in and around Turkey, Iran etc. From Italy, bruscardoli, puntarelle, artichokes, cime di rapa and rare cucurbits such as these Caroselli.

Mushrooms include Morels and Mousseron / St George. See you in June, when English berries will be star of the show.

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

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