



All About: Local Peaches

In Western PA, this wave of heat is ripening summer fruits, which is great news for those of us who love peaches!

We had the opportunity to speak with local grower Carolyn McQuiston, owner of *Dawson's Orchards* in Enon Valley, PA, about the peach growing aspect of her operation. She emphasizes the fact that local peaches, as well as all other types of stone fruit, are far superior to peaches shipped over long distances. Peaches sold locally are able to remain on the tree a few more days, which allows their natural sugars to develop. This means extra flavorful and sweet fruit!

We want to address the fact that the Environmental Working Group (EWG) includes peaches on its “*Dirty Dozen*” list of produce with pesticide residues. Peaches are difficult to grow organically in this part of the country. However, there are many responsible local growers like Carolyn, who minimize their use of sprays through the use of tactics like mating disruption, which keeps pest numbers low. Carolyn also sprays to control some pests and disease early in the season, before the fruits have formed. If you are purchasing your peaches locally, you have the unique opportunity to talk with your farmer about their pest and disease management practices and ensure that your purchase has been grown responsibly.

To clean peaches before eating them, follow *these simple instructions*. Cool running water and a gentle rub are all it takes! Peeling the fruit can also serve as a method of removing pesticide residues.

To find local peaches, check out your local farmers markets or head out to a farm!



Photo from Dawson's Orchards website. You can find their fruits at [these markets](#) and in the Penn's Corner CSA.