

# Local farmers' markets bustle



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

ABOVE: Kamila Young, 8, purchases a bunch of Narcissus at Aptos Farmers' Market Saturday. BELOW: Shawn Ames (right) helps a customer with a purchase of Watsonville grown apples Saturday at the Prevedelli Farms booth at the Aptos Farmers' Market.

## Farmer's Market Aptos Farmers' Market attracts vendors throughout the county

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APTOS — With nearly 80 vendors selling everything from artichokes to zucchini, the Saturday farmers' market at Cabrillo College boasts hordes of regular customers that pack the booths from the time it opens at 8 a.m. until it closes at noon. Vendors pack much of the

parking lot in the upper part of the campus. They sell fresh produce and meats, as well as a host of ready-made and prepared foods such as corn-on-the-cob, baked potatoes and hot coffee.

The Farmers Market String Band belts out lively bluegrass



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# MARKET

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tunes, and other entertainers, such as The Great Morgani, occasionally visit as well.

It's a place where customers return week after week to vendors who call them by name, and where some vendors have been coming since the market began there about 30 years ago.

"It's a great market," said assistant manager Amanda Seely. "It's such an outing for people."

Perhaps the largest vendor at the Aptos market is Prevedelli Farms, which sells apples, pears, berries, squash and green beans, along with jars of preserves. The family has been a vendor at the market nearly as long as the market has been open.

"We've been doing it for more than 20 years," said Geri Prevedelli-Lathrop, who, along with her husband, Sam Lathrop, helps run the 70-acre farm. "I really enjoy it. I see a lot of regulars. You get to know people and see their kids grow up. It's like a big family."

For about five years, Marguerite and Steve Remde have been growing olives on Belle Farms, a seven-acre farm off Smith Road in Watsonville. The olives are custom-pressed at a plant in Modesto.

When it comes to comparing Remde's oil and store-bought varieties, the difference is a yawning chasm, she says. Her olives are of good quality, and are raised sustainably. Additionally, her oils are sold fresh, while those in grocery stores may have been stored for up to a year.

"This is the best olive oil ever," Aptos resident Mike Viguerie said as he purchased \$40 worth of the product.

Judy Nagamine, co-owner of A. Nagamine Nursery in Watsonville, said she often appreciates the tenacity of the customers.

## Other Watsonville vendors at the Aptos Farmers' Market

- Ariel Mushrooms
- Bill Welch, selling cluster-flowered narcissus flowers and bulbs
- Blue Heron Farms
- Cavanaugh Color
- Corralitos Market (seasonal)
- Lily's Roasted Corn
- Mello-dy Ranch
- Pacific Rare Plant Nursery
- Vasquez Farm

"We have people who will come out year-round, even in the rain," she said.

Her father-in-law began growing flowers in 1967, but when the flower market crashed after international competition took a majority of business, he decided to begin producing organic food. They've been growing cucumbers, herbs, beans and tomatoes in greenhouses on their small farm ever since.

The Nagamine family has grown organic food at its Freedom Boulevard location for about 10 years.

Another longtime vendor is Silva Orchards, which is located at 2642 Freedom Blvd., and also has a fruit stand at

2599 Freedom Blvd.

The Silva family sells apples, cider and peaches.

Patty Silva, whose husband, Eugene, runs the farm, said that many growers are turning their eyes to the upcoming growing season, when a lack of winter rains could result in less-than-ideal crops.

Bar D Ranch is a five-acre farm near Elkhorn Slough in Watsonville. Tucked in an oak woodland on Tumbleweed Lane just off Hidden Valley Road, it's been growing produce since 1975. Owners Steve Jones and Patti Morgan say they focus on growing without the use of synthetic chemicals.

They grow greens such as arugula and lettuce varieties, strawberries and more than 10 varieties of potatoes. Bar D also sells jams and preserves.

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*The Saturday market is at Cabrillo College in Aptos from 8 a.m. until noon. For information, visit [www.montereybayfarmers.org](http://www.montereybayfarmers.org)*



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**Marguerite Remde, owner of Belle Farms in Watsonville, chats with a customer Saturday at the Aptos Farmers' Market.**