

# Harvest of the Month

Network for a Healthy California



## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 medium peach (150g)

Calories 59

Calories from Fat 3

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 2g	9%
Sugars 13g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 17%
Calcium 1%	Iron 2%

Source: [www.nutritiondata.com](http://www.nutritiondata.com)

For labels of other stone fruits and nutrition information in bar graph format, visit the *Educators' Corner* at [www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com).

**STONE FRUITS:**  
**PEACHES**  
June

## Health and Learning Success Go Hand-in-Hand

California's geography offers a bounty of fresh produce and recreational areas. From stone fruits and salad greens to state and local parks, there is no shortage of healthy foods to eat and outdoor activities to do during the summer months. Students who eat healthy and are active at least one hour every day perform and focus better in school. Use **Harvest of the Month** to allow students to experience California with their senses. Teach students to live a healthy, active lifestyle and integrate with core curricula to link the classroom, cafeteria, home and community.



## Exploring California Stone Fruits

Offering activities that allow students to experience stone fruits, such as peaches and nectarines, engages them in the learning process and creates increased interest, awareness and support for eating more fruits and vegetables.

### Tools:

- Two ripe peaches and two ripe nectarines (yellow and white varieties) per student group\*
- Paring knife and cutting board per student group
- Paper towels

\*Choose peaches and nectarines that are fragrant and firm to slightly soft when pressed.

Optional: Sample other stone fruits (cherries, plums, apricots, etc.)

### Sensory Exploration Activity:

- Distribute one ripe peach and nectarine variety to each student group
- Observe the look, feel and smell of each variety; record observations
- Cut open fruit; observe, taste and record observations for each variety
- Discuss similarities and differences between varieties
- Record students' favorite variety; share results with child nutrition staff

### For more ideas, reference:

*Nutrition to Grow On*, CDE, 2001.

## Cooking in Class: Peach Smoothies

### Ingredients:

Makes 35 tastes at ¼ cup each

- 6 fresh peaches, pitted and sliced
- 6 fresh nectarines, pitted and sliced
- 4½ cups plain nonfat yogurt (or milk)
- 4½ cups 100% orange juice
- 3 tablespoons honey
- Blender
- Small paper cups

Blend all ingredients together with ice. Serve cold in cups.

Adapted from: *Kids Cook Farm-Fresh Food*, CDE, 2002.

### For more recipes, visit:

[www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com)

## How Much Do I Need?

A serving of peaches or nectarines is one medium fruit. This is about the size of a baseball. Remind students to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables throughout the day to reach their total daily needs.

### Recommended Daily Amounts of Fruits and Vegetables\*

Kids, Ages 5-12	Teens, Ages 13-18	Adults, 19+
2½ - 5 cups per day	3½ - 6½ cups per day	3½ - 6½ cups per day

\*Ranges take into account three activity levels: sedentary, moderately active and active. For example, active individuals should aim to eat the higher number of cups per day. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to learn more.



## June Events

- National Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month
- National Hunger Awareness Day
- Family History Day

## School Garden: Scare the Crows

Bird netting, floating row cover (remay) and reflective bird scare tape are all effective ways to keep birds from crops. Scarecrows, although not the most effective, may help keep birds from eating the harvest and are a festive addition to a school garden. Auction scarecrows for a school fundraiser.

### Tools:

- Two bamboo poles (four feet and six feet long)
- Twine (about two feet) and roll of string
- Old pair of pants and long-sleeved shirt
- Straw\*
- Scarecrow head\*\*

\*May replace with crumpled brown paper bags or plastic bags.

\*\*May use large plastic bottle, empty plant container, broom head, paper plate. Decorate face and dress with hat and twine braids.

### Activity:

- Use twine to secure four-foot bamboo pole 14 inches below the top of six-foot pole.
- Tie string from front to back belt loop of pants to make suspender. Repeat on opposite side of pants and hang pants from crossbar.
- Tie off pant bottoms with string and fill with straw.
- Place shirt, one sleeve at a time, on crossbar and button front. Fill with straw and tuck into pants.
- Place head on top of crossbar.
- Secure scarecrow in front of garden.

Adapted from: [www.lifelab.org](http://www.lifelab.org)

### For more ideas, visit:

[www.teachingheart.net/scarecrow.html](http://www.teachingheart.net/scarecrow.html)

## What's in a Name?

**Pronunciation:** pēch  
**Spanish name:** durazno  
**Family:** Rosaceae  
**Genus:** *Prunus*  
**Species:** *P. persica*



The peach comes from a deciduous fruit-bearing tree of the rose family and is native to China. Its botanical name *persica* resulted from the original belief that peaches were native to Persia (Iran).\* Commercially, peaches and nectarines are treated as different fruits but they belong to the same species. The nectarine is a type of peach with a smooth, fuzzless skin.

Peaches and nectarines are classified as stone fruit, or drupes, meaning that they possess a single large seed or stone surrounded by juicy flesh. Other common stone fruits include cherries, plums and apricots. Peaches are classified into two major cultivars — clingstone and freestone — depending on how the flesh sticks to the stone (or pit). Commercially, nearly all clingstone varieties are processed (pit removed), then canned, preserved, juiced or used in other food products (e.g., fruit cups, baby food). Freestone peaches are primarily marketed as fresh.

\*Refer to a *Slice of Peach History* on page 3 for more information.

### For more information, visit:

[www.extension.iastate.edu/nutrition/week/july4.php](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/nutrition/week/july4.php)

## Reasons to Eat Peaches

### One medium peach provides:

- A good source of Vitamin C.



### What is Vitamin C?

- A water-soluble vitamin.
  - Also known as ascorbic acid.
  - Acts as an antioxidant (attacks free radicals in the body).
  - Helps body make collagen (a substance that helps strengthen connective tissues and keep gums healthy).
  - Insufficient intake may result in disease known as scurvy.
- A source of vitamins including Vitamin A, Vitamin E, niacin, riboflavin and thiamin.
  - A source of minerals including potassium, calcium, iron and magnesium.

## Just the Facts

- Genetically, nectarines differ from peaches by a single recessive gene — the one that makes peaches fuzzy.
- Yellow-fleshed peaches are more popular among Americans and Europeans, while Asians prefer the white-fleshed varieties.
- Members of the rose family, peaches are related to the almond.
- Peaches rank among the top ten most commonly eaten fruits and vegetables by California children.
- The peach is the state flower of Delaware and the state fruit of South Carolina. Georgia is nicknamed *The Peach State*.
- In World War I, peach pits were used as filters in gas masks.

### For more information, visit:

[www.localharvest.org/nectarines.jsp](http://www.localharvest.org/nectarines.jsp)

[www.cfaitc.org/Commodity/pdf/ClingPeaches.pdf](http://www.cfaitc.org/Commodity/pdf/ClingPeaches.pdf)

## Eat Your Colors

Fruits and vegetables come in a rainbow of colors. Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day — red, yellow/orange, white, green and blue/purple. These may lower the risk of some cancers. Peaches are in the yellow/orange and white/tan/brown color groups.

Color Group	Health Benefits	Examples of Fruits and Vegetables
Yellow/ Orange	Help maintain heart health, vision health and healthy immune system	Peaches, nectarines, apricots, cantaloupe, yellow tomatoes, carrots, yellow peppers, wax beans, yellow summer squash
White/Tan/ Brown	Help maintain heart health and cholesterol levels that are already healthy; may lower risk of some cancers	White peaches, white nectarines, bananas, casaba melon, rutabaga, tamarind, garlic, lotus root, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots

### For more information, visit:

[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

[www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com)

## Student Sleuths

- 1 The store sells the following peach items: fresh peaches, frozen peach slices, dried peaches, canned peaches, peach fruit leather and peach-flavored iced tea. You want to buy a peach item that will provide you with the most nutrients to help fill up "your pyramid." Complete the following steps to determine which peach item will provide you with the most nutrients for the least cost per serving.
  - a. Compare the Nutrition Facts labels for each item. (Labels also available at [www.nutritiondata.com](http://www.nutritiondata.com).)
  - b. What is the unit cost (per pound, can or package) for each item? Determine the cost per serving for each item.
  - c. Make a chart showing each of the peach items, nutrient values, unit costs and costs per serving.
  - d. Which peach serving costs the least? The most?
  - e. Which peach serving provides the most nutrients? The least?
  - f. Which peach item will provide you with the most nutrients for the least cost?

- 2 Identify on a California map the top ten counties where clingstone peaches are grown. What geographic characteristics do these counties have in common? Hypothesize why these characteristics are ideal for cling peach production. Repeat for freestone peaches. Compare the lists. What are some geographical and climate differences between these areas? What determines if a county's geography is better for growing cling peaches versus freestones?

### For information, visit:

[www.cfaitc.org/Commodity/pdf/ClingPeaches.pdf](http://www.cfaitc.org/Commodity/pdf/ClingPeaches.pdf)

[www.cdffa.ca.gov](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov)

[www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)

## A Slice of Peach History

- The peach tree originated in western China about 4,000 years ago.
- Alexander the Great introduced the peach to Greek and Roman society.
- From the Mediterranean and North Africa, the peach traveled north during the Middle Ages with the Moors to the Iberian Peninsula.
- Spanish and Portuguese explorers brought peaches to the Americas in the 1500s.
- Spanish missionaries in California planted the first peach trees in the mid-18th century.
- Russian immigrants brought peach seeds to San Francisco in the early 1800s and planted them near Fort Ross.
- Forty-niners began California's commercial peach production in 1849 after demand for peaches could not be fulfilled by eastern supply.



## How Do Peaches Grow?

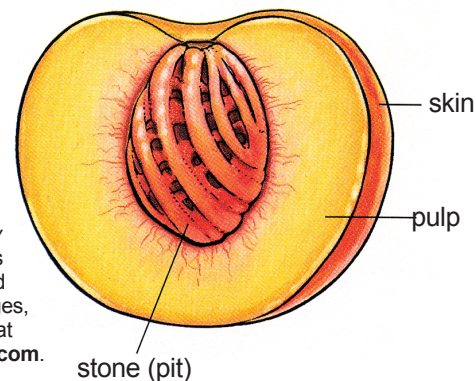
Peach trees are warm-weather deciduous trees that grow 15 to 25 feet high. Susceptible to drought and frost, peach trees grow best inland and in warmer, tropical to subtropical climates. Most commercial trees are grafted cultivars, bearing fruit after about three to five years. Healthy trees reach peak production when about 10 years old and can live up to 20 years.

Like most stone fruits, peach trees flower in early spring before the leaves are visible. Unlike most fruit trees, the flowers of peach trees are produced in early spring before the leaves. Pruning is necessary during the spring to ensure quality fruit production. This technique of thinning the trees increases the size and improves the taste of the fruit. Commercial growers use a machine to brush the peach skin after harvesting to remove most of the natural fuzz.

Soil	Deep, well-drained, sandy loam
Exposure	Full sun
Irrigation	Constant water supply, increased slightly before harvest
Planting	Bareroot trees planted in winter; pruning in spring
Harvest Season	June through September; peaks in July and August
Harvesting	Hand-picked when fruit is mature and firm; 3 to 4 times in 3 day intervals
Storage	Refrigerated immediately to 35 F (slows ripening); then processed (clingstone) or shipped to market (freestone)

### For more information, visit:

[www.uga.edu/fruit/peach.html](http://www.uga.edu/fruit/peach.html)



Adapted from: *Tall and Tasty Fruit Trees*, Meredith Sayles Hughes, 2000. To download reproducible botanical images, visit the *Educators' Corner* at [www.harvestofthemoonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemoonth.com).

## Home Grown Facts

- The United States is the world's leading grower of peaches.
- California leads the nation in peach and nectarine production, representing more than 87 percent of the nation's total exports.
- With a combined export value over \$123 million, peaches and nectarines rank in California's top 15 commodity exports.
- Fresno County is the leading producer of the State's peach (40%) and nectarine (56%) crops.
- Other top peach-producing counties include Tulare, Stanislaus, Sutter and Yuba. Tulare and Kings counties are also leading growers of nectarines.

2005 Data

### For more information, visit:

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/>

### For more information, reference:

*Tall and Tasty: Fruit Trees*, Meredith Sayles Hughes, 2000.



## Student Advocates

Schools and local parks often need the support of community members to provide a safe and clean environment for recreation. Clean up litter, plant trees, or volunteer at a local park or school to instill pride and community ownership. Encourage students to get involved — it may help them become more active both physically and as leaders in their community.

### Getting Started:

- Choose a local neighborhood park. Contact the local city or county parks department.
- Work with department officials to make a list of improvement projects to enhance the park.
- Prioritize the list and select a project.
- Organize and promote a neighborhood event to complete the project.
- Talk to neighbors about ways to keep the park safe and clean. Or, make a flyer with tips and distribute to community members.
- Write and submit an article to a local paper about the activities.

### For more information, visit:

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)  
[www.activeca.org/parks](http://www.activeca.org/parks)

## Adventurous Activities

### Calendar Connection:

Family History Day takes place in the middle of June. Celebrate students' family history, culture and traditions.

- Ask students to interview older relatives to find out when and how their families came to California.
- Include questions that explore what family members did when they first arrived in California, including:
  - what foods they ate and recipes they used;
  - how and where they got their food; and
  - what types of activities and/or hobbies they enjoyed.
- Have students write a report or give presentation to class on their family history.
- Make classroom charts to display from where students' families came and for how long they have lived in California.

### For more ideas, visit:

[www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com)



## Next Month: Melons

## Physical Activity Corner

California boasts nearly 300 state parks and countless numbers of local and community parks. Parks provide a natural venue for students to engage in physical activity while being in California's rich and diverse environments. Showcase this geography by taking students into the field for an interactive lesson.

- Contact a nearby park to find out what types of physical activities are available within the park. Get brochures or information to distribute to students.
- Organize a class or school field trip to a park.
- Upon arrival, explore park as a class and incorporate a geography or botany lesson.
- Allow students to pick what physical activity they would like to do within the park (e.g., hike, swim, play game of soccer, softball, tag).
- Encourage students to visit other local or state parks with family or friends.

*Alternative: Refer to Student Advocates and coordinate a classroom project that will work to improve or beautify a neighborhood park.*

### For more ideas, visit:

[www.pecentral.org](http://www.pecentral.org)

## Cafeteria Connections

Display all student work on cafeteria bulletin board.

### Grades K–5:

- Select a book from *Literature Links*.
- Work with teachers or librarian and ask to read the book to students.
- After reading the book, ask students to make a collage featuring peaches and/or ways to eat peaches.

### Grades 6–12:

- Encourage students to read *Epitaph for a Peach* by David Masumoto or one of the books listed from *Literature Links*.
- Have students design a cover for the book or draw illustrations depicting the story. Or students can write a poem about their favorite fruit and vegetable.

## Literature Links

- **Elementary:** *Growing Seasons* by Elsie Splear, *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl, *Peach Boy: A Japanese Legend* by Gail Sakurai, *Tall and Tasty: Fruit Trees* by Meredith Sayles Hughes.
- **Secondary:** *The Backyard Orchardist* by Stella Otto, *Family Trees: The Peach Culture of the Piedmont* by Mike Corbin and *Science and Service* by Ann Scheuring.

### For more ideas, visit:

[www.cfaitc.org/Bookshelf/Bookshelf.php](http://www.cfaitc.org/Bookshelf/Bookshelf.php)

