



Canberra Times
Wednesday 5/11/2008

Page: 8
 Section: Food and Wine
 Region: Canberra, AU
 Circulation: 34068
 Type: Capital City Daily
 Size: 187.95 sq.cms.

A long commute for unusual fruit

Climbing avocado and custard-apple trees is a fortnightly affair for Canberra residents Andrew and Belinda Burnet. In 2001, the Burnets bought their first avocado and custard-apple orchard in northern NSW, sharing their time between Belinda Burnet's involvement with children with special needs and Andrew Burnet's business. In 2004, they began selling their Burnbar Fruit produce at the farmers' market at Exhibition Park.

"Every fortnight during the picking season, Andrew and I travel 13 hours to our Burnbar orchard," Belinda Burnet says. "We hand pick our avocados and custard apples and then drive the produce straight to the farmers' market."

The picking season for the avocados and custard apples lasts seven months, from June to December, but the orchard takes much work throughout the year – pruning, planting and maintaining the trees which grow about 1.5m every year.

She says one of the most common questions from people is how ripe should they buy avocados and custard apples? Both only ripen after they have been picked. To ripen avocados and custard apples, place them in a warm room close to other fruits.

to market



Freshly picked avocados and custard apples can take up to two weeks to ripen. Through natural ripening, the fruits will have a longer shelf life and should be greater in taste and texture.

When they're ripe, they are slightly soft, like the inside of your hand, she says.

The Burnets' large, buttery, lamb hass variety of avocados are popular with Canberra buyers. This larger lamb hass variety has a strong skin and so does not deteriorate as fast as other varieties.

They encounter some scepticism from customers at the unusual sight of custard apples. But inside the green bumpy skin, the white flesh is sweet, juicy and delicious, she says. The fruit is also high in nutrients and good in a fruit salad. To eat, cut the custard apple into segments, remove the seed and scoop out the flesh.

■ This article was contributed by the Capital Region Farmers Market.



Custard apples, tastier than they look