

# Farmers' market season set to begin in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Mother Nature is playing havoc with produce growers.

Despite the unseasonably cool weather and continuous rain, farmers' market season is here.

The two South Shore markets start operation the first week of June. The Ski Run Boulevard market between Birch and Larch streets will run every Friday starting June 3 from 9am-2pm. The El Dorado County Certified Farmers Market Association will be back at the American Legion Hall parking lot on Highway 50 on Tuesdays starting June 7, from 8am-1pm.



Javier Toscano will be at the Tuesday farmers' market in South Lake Tahoe starting in June.  
Photo/LTN file

"I think people are removed from nature," said Alex Mellon, who coordinates the Ski Run market. He said people ask why tomatoes aren't at the market in June when they are in the

grocery store. A definite disconnect exists between some people understanding where their food comes from.

The same goes with some people expecting produce to look perfect like it does in a grocery store. Naturally, it just doesn't happen that way. Despite some imperfections to fruit and veggies at area farmers' markets, it's still good quality.

Another thing is most of the produce was picked the morning it is sold at a market – making it the freshest possible unless one were to grow it themselves.

Both South Shore markets rely heavily on El Dorado County farmers to supply the fruits and vegetables that are sold each week. Some farmers, though, come from the Central Valley. This is a good thing because it has been warmer there.

“Cherries are slow, but we have a grower from Stockton. Those look really good,” said Jim Coalwell, who runs the Tuesday market in South Lake Tahoe. “Our local ones are borderline because we need warm weather for the sweetness.”

Expect lettuces, cherries, peaches, nectarines, red onions and garlic to be some of the items available at the first markets.

El Dorado County's initial peach harvest looks iffy because of the moisture that keeps coming.

“It's going to be a sketchy peach season for sure. It will be good later on,” said Coalwell, who runs the Red Shack in Placerville with wife Lois.

Curly leaf is hurting the trees.

“The leaves curl up and dry up and fall off. If new leaves have not started, there is no protection for little fruit to develop,” Coalwell explained.

He's lined up a grower from Fresno to bring peaches the first part of the season, with the hope El Dorado County's trees

will recover for later in the summer.

The Ski Run market is run in conjunction with Sacred Path Farms in Coloma. The idea last year when the market first opened in August was to operate in the late afternoon or evening, but some businesses on Ski Run made sure that did not happen. This is why it has the hours it does.

Both South Shore markets will have art booths and food vendors beyond produce.

New to the Tuesday market will be Sugar Lily Bakery from El Dorado.

Coalwell has his fingers crossed the South Shore will be able to keep supporting the market.

“The market is still doing good, but not like it was a few years ago. I don’t think a lot of those people are there any more,” Coalwell said.

He’s right. Plus, unemployment in South Lake Tahoe is close to 17 percent, so the number of those being able to afford any farmers’ market is dwindling.

As with all farmers’ markets, what is available is based on what the farmers have grown and what season it is. Don’t expect corn and tomatoes for a bit.

### **Other farmers’ markets:**

- Foothill Farmer’s Market, which is scheduled lakeside at Tahoe City’s Commons Beach, started May 26. It is every Thursday from 8am-noon until Oct. 13.
- The market opens in Kings Beach on June 14.
- Farm fresh fruits, vegetables, arts and entertainment are available every Saturday June 11-Sept. 17 at the 3rd and Curry Street Farmers Market in Carson City. The market runs from

8:30am to 1:30pm.

- Mills Park in Carson City hosts a farmers market every Wednesday at the pavilion from 3-7pm.
- Wednesday from June 1-Sept. 14 8am-1pm at Lampe Park, 1325 Waterloo Lane, Gardnerville.