

Fuzzy thin skin makes peaches super seasonal

By Jessica Stoller-Conrad, NPR

If lately you've noticed the farmers' market flooded with signs that say "donut," "cling," "whiteflesh" and "freestone," you won't be surprised to learn that August is National Peach Month. Though the juicy fruits pack the produce aisles now, in a few short months a good peach might be hard to find.



Many fruits, though harvested in other parts of the world, are available in the United States all year long. So why are peaches so seasonal, and in the winter, either difficult to find or hard as a rock?

To clear up our "fuzzy" understanding, The Salt turned to Will McClatchey, vice president and director of research at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. McClatchey says that peaches are easy to find in the late summer and early fall because they tend to ripen all at once. Though the plant's "limited-time only" strategy is annoying to consumers, biologically, it makes them very efficient reproducers.

"If you're a fruit tree, the best way to get your fruit dispersed is to have a whole bunch of fruit [at once] so then the animals come and go crazy eating fruit, which helps secure the next generation of trees," says McClatchey. Although nowadays we're the animals going crazy over peaches, the trees originated in Central Asia, their fruits initially feeding large mammals like bears, camels, and elephants, he says.

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