

# Los Angeles Times

## Market Watch: Small green plums are Armenian treat



Alan Asdoorian of Island Farms sells green plums grown in Kingsburg at the Burbank farmers market. (David Karp / April 30, 2011)

By David Karp, Special to the Los Angeles Times

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Plums usually don't start until the end of May, but a few growers, mostly of Armenian origin, have started bringing green plums, which are unripe fruits the size of cherries. These are hard and sour, and would not appeal to most Americans, but they're much appreciated in the Mideast as the first fruits of spring and are eaten fresh, sometimes with a pinch of salt.

Alan Asdoorian of Island Farms, from Kingsburg, says that his customers want only a certain variety with a distinctive taste and that if he runs out and tries to bring similar-looking immature fruits of standard varieties, like Friar or Simka, they wave their fingers and say "*voch*" — "no" in Armenian.



What type is this green plum? It appears to be a myrobalan, the small-fruited "cherry plum," a species native to western Asia and primarily used in California as a rootstock. When the fruits ripen in a month or two, they turn yellow but don't get much larger than a quarter; Asdoorian's customers say that at that point the traditional use is to make a sheet or fruit roll of the dried pulp.

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