

# San Francisco Chronicle

## Tayberries have a short tart season

Jane Tunks

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It's berry time at the farmers' market. Amidst the blueberries, blackberries and raspberries are tayberries, a purplish-red berry that was first grown in Scotland nearly 30 years ago. Derek Jennings crossed the Aurora blackberry with a European raspberry (known only by its number 626/67) at the Scottish Horticultural Research Institute in 1980 and named it in honor of the Tay River. It has been quickly embraced by those who love its sweet-tart flavor.



Eric Luse / The Chronicle

Tayberries aren't ready for harvest until they nearly fall off the vine, and as such, the fragile fruits arrive at the farmers' markets at their juicy, most flavorful prime.

**How to select:** Tayberries range in color from red to purple, with the purple ones being the most soft and ripe. Inspect baskets to be sure there aren't any moldy or shriveled tayberries.

**How to store:** Because they aren't harvested until they're practically falling off the bush, tayberries are much more delicate than their blackberry and raspberry parents. Yerena Farms' farmer Poli Yerena advises his customers

to leave the berries uncovered in the refrigerator for up to three days. The cardboard boxes they're sold in keeps them fresh longer than plastic. At home in Watsonville, Yerena also freezes his tayberries up to one year.

**When in season:** Tayberries' summertime sojourn lasts about six weeks, from early June to mid-August.

**How to use:** Tayberries have a naturally high level of pectin, and make the perfect jamming berry. Alan Carter, the executive chef of Mission Beach Cafe, describes the flavor as a tart red blackberry and says you can swap in a tayberry in any raspberry recipe. Carter also says that when made into a sauce, the deep, rich flavor of the berries goes well with just about any chocolate dessert. Add a little lemon juice and sugar to berries, blend and strain to get rid of any seeds.

**On menus:** Jessica Sullivan from Boulevard in San Francisco quickly sautes the berries in their own juices and then serves them atop a cheesecake "sundae." She also makes a simple tayberry sorbet and features them in a berry bowl, with blackberries, blueberries and raspberries. At Mission Beach Cafe, Carter uses tayberries with olallieberries in one of his renowned pies, as well as gussying up a flourless hazelnut mousse tart with a few tayberries. A dessert at Perbacco in the Financial District features tayberries, raspberries and strawberries marinated in vanilla syrup as a topper for panna cotta.