

ripe & ready

IT'S between seasons again, but spring/summer fruit and veg shouldn't be too far off, say Ross Cowlings of United Organics and David Faranda of Naturally Fruit at Taringa.

Citrus and strawberries are starting to wind down and everyone is waiting for stone fruit and the rest of the new season bounty, Faranda says. Peaches and nectarines are starting to arrive, but aren't top quality yet. Buyers should expect to wait about four to six weeks.

Strawberries are still recovering from the beating they took in heavy rain a few weeks ago, but are cheap and widely available.

Raspberries and blueberries are in good volumes at the moment, a touch expensive but great eating.

Asparagus is again well priced and widely available. Ross Cowlings of United Organics says the organic crops have well and truly taken off and top-quality organic asparagus is out there. Cowlings also has a good supply of green beans and broadbeans, though tomato supplies are still looking dismal.

"Last week we were paying up to \$55 a box, which is still expensive," Faranda says.

Those who like a little spice can pick up some organic chillies, which Cowlings says are slowly beginning to

arrive. Sporadic supplies of rhubarb are around, as are a lot of potatoes. Organic pawpaws, pineapples and bananas are faring well, while pears have come to the end of their season.

Faranda says all melons are great eating at the moment especially watermelon and rockmelon.

New season mangoes are also beginning to trickle in, but it will take time and a good dose of warm Queensland weather to really get them rolling.

Local Hass avocados have another four to six weeks in them before stockists get supplies from Western Australia and New Zealand.

Mushrooms are value, carrots are

consistently good and cauliflower and broccoli are good quality.

Grapes from California are also good and small, seedless black grapes have arrived from north Queensland.

Cowlings has some new season purple garlic, which is the Italian variety.

Nicola potatoes from Queensland are fantastic, says Faranda. A medium to large potato they're perfect for roasting.

Faranda advises us to put crisp apples in the fridge. Having spent the past three to four months in cold storage, they won't last unless kept chilled.

