

Shopping Local



There's a trend in the food industry that's picking up steam. More and more consumers want to know where their food is coming from and who is growing their food. It's even changing how some people shop for groceries.

"Most of our food comes to the store within a 50-mile radius," said Kiya Tabb, a board member at Bushel & Peck in Charles Town.

You might expect to find a store like Bushel & Peck in a trendy New York or Las Angeles neighborhood. However, when you walk inside and meet the friendly staff and see farmers stocking shelves with their produce, there's no doubt you're in West Virginia.

Tabb explained their mission at the store is to connect people in Jefferson County and surrounding areas, with their local farmers. Throughout the week farmers make deliveries to the store, and customers have a chance to talk one on one with the person who is growing the food they are going to eat.

"We try to have are farmers in here from time to time," Tabb explained. "It's important to know how your food is

grown, and people like to know the farmer's growing practices."

Over the past three years Tabb, and the other board members at Bushel & Peck, noticed a desire for a grocery store in Charles Town selling local food. After years of work, Bushel & Peck opened their doors in October 2107.

"Everyone on the board is a volunteer," Tabb added.

About 20 minutes north of Charles Town is another local grocery store. The Community Garden Market in Shepherdstown offers locally grown and organic food.

"The community response has been great," said market co-owner Scott Anderson. "Business has really been ramping up each month."

When you walk in the store, you know you're in for an experience. The freezers on the far-right side of the store are jam packed with locally sourced eggs, salads and other prepared meals all made with fresh food.

"We try and work with our farmers year-round," Anderson stressed. "A lot of them have green houses and hot houses and hydroponics, so we try and source as much food as possible from them."

The Community Garden Market takes things a step further than just buying fresh food, the store opened a kitchen at the beginning of 2018. They take some of the food producers bring in and make sandwiches, hummus, beef jerky, donuts, soups and a whole host of other items.

“People can get those things from us already made, or we can show them where the ingredients are in the store to make it themselves,” said Anderson.

One thing Anderson has been working on with his customers is to ditch the grocery list. Anderson likes when customers come in with an open mind and buy what they need for the week based on the fresh food available.

“It’s just exciting when people come in and say, ‘Oh I didn’t know you had this, I’ll try that this week,’” Anderson continued.

Local grocery stores aren’t just located in the eastern panhandle. Huntington has a very successful store of their own, The Wild Ramp. They call themselves a year-round farmers’ market and offer all kinds of fresh produce and value-added products.

“We work with, on average, about 80 farmers a month,” said Lauren Kemp, director of development at the Wild Ramp.

When the store first opened, Kemp underestimated what could be grown in the Huntington area. She said it has been fun working with farmers and watching them grow their business.

“That is just one reason it is important to buy local.” Kemp continued. “You are putting money into your neighbor’s pockets. They work hard to grow this food, and it is nice to see that hard work pay off.”

The Wild Ramp has a white board beside the door when you walk in. You can see what farmer has prod-

ucts in the store that week, where their farm is located and what they’re selling. It makes for a unique trip to the grocery store, one you won’t get at a chain store.

The managers of Bushel & Peck, Community Garden Market and The Wild Ramp admits, their stores aren’t a one stop shop just yet, but they are all getting close. If you walk in to one of these stores with an open mind and take some time to look around, you are going to find most everything you need to feed you through the week.

Bushel & Peck
100 West Washington St.
Charles Town, WV

Community Garden Market
148 N. Washington St.
Berkeley Springs, WV
communitygardenmarket.com

Wild Ramp
555 14th St.
Huntington, WV
wildramp.org

