

OLIVER KAY

CROP REPORT

Winter 22/23

NEW SEASON WINTER WONDERS

As we enter a new season, with it we see lovely new British produce! From the last of the sprouts, carrots and kales to beautiful shitake mushrooms and rhubarb in sight.

There's a lot going on in the world, and that includes the world of fruit and veg. There have been plenty of challenges with growing conditions but, as always, thanks to our great range of suppliers close to home and further afield, we do our best to ensure you have all the fresh ingredients you need for the coming winter.

Find out what to be choosing or losing from your menus over the next few months, as our buyer Lee gives you the lowdown on what's happening in the world of fresh produce.

Should you have any questions please contact our team who will be happy to help. Orders can be placed over the phone during working hours, or online via our website or app – 24 hours a day – 7 days a week to suit your needs!

Read on for more information about key produce lines and recipe ideas.



For any enquiries, or to order call the office on 01204 385463
or order online at www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk or via the Oliver Kay app

GROWING CONDITIONS

The summer to winter season change over went very well, a mild autumn allowed a smooth transition from UK to Mediterranean supply.

Supply of salad, tomatoes and broccoli from Spain and Morocco is now underway and will cover us throughout the winter period.

The hot, dry conditions that have proven a challenge over the summer are still having an effect all across Europe. Straw quality is challenging. Straw is needed for mushroom production in the compost and also to protect UK carrots & Parsnip as a blanket from frost so they can hibernate over the winter.

Low rainfall has also effected the tonnage of potato and most root vegetables across Europe and at home. Dry conditions in Spain have impacted on the availability of Spanish onion and also affected winter citrus crop. Both lemon and easy peelers are much smaller and the skins are more scarred than we have seen in years.

The current ice blast from the artic is having an effect on all outdoor grown crops in the UK- Rainbow chard has been a casualty and spring green will be out for a few weeks. Netherlands and northern France also had the cold. Rain in Spain caused a few harvesting problems at the 50th week.

CHALLENGES & LOOKING FORWARD

- Gas & electric prices are influencing the forward cost of next year's summer crops across Europe. This growing process starts in winter to grow seedlings for spring planting, ready for next summer's harvest.
- Strike action - Concerns over port delays - Border Force strike are concerning importers and the situation is being closely monitored.



IN SEASON IN THE UK

UK Brussel sprouts

UK white, red and green cabbage

UK carrot and parsnip quality is good

Scottish swede is very good

Spring greens & kale from Lancashire are excellent, albeit the current frost is a challenge

UK Oyster and Shiitake mushroom

UK apple – large red and Bramley underway and going well

UK flat lettuce, watercress & beansprouts from greenhouses in Lancashire

Potatoes - Don't forget the humble UK spud!

Cut micro herbs are still packing a punch from the greenhouses in Evesham

Yorkshire rhubarb starts early January



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VEGETABLES

Potatoes – now in store. Quality overall is ok, production is down depending on where it is grown. Quantity of baker in the crop is reduced.

Carrot & parsnip – Crop continued to bulk up through September and October but still down in tonnage. Larger processing sizes are reduced and plans are underway to import in May to ensure availability and quality for the coming year.

Swede – Main crop quality is good from Stewart's in Tayside, Scotland.

Brussel Sprouts – UK loose and prepacked sprout – This year's crop is good but we have noticed with it being a mild autumn they are not as firm as usual and although sweet, they have a reduced shelf life so we are keeping stocks tight and refrigerated.

Cauliflower – We're finishing off our UK crops and French imports will see us through most of winter this year as unfortunately much of the UK over-winter cauliflower didn't survive the August heatwave.

White & red cabbage – Following the challenges faced in the summer, the crops recovered well over September, October and even into November due a mild Autumn and near perfect growing conditions. Most crop is now in store for supply over the winter period. We do expect to have to import red cabbage in late spring.

Green cabbage – Despite planting problems, UK cabbage is very good. No issues are foreseen and we will probably import around May before the new season UK begins.

Broccoli – Spanish underway as planned and will take us through winter. Our plan is still to source from Scotland next summer to ensure quality and availability.

Onion – Large onions from Spain still affected by drought this summer. This is a similar story for yellow and red cooking onions in the UK, Netherlands, France and Poland, reducing availability across Europe and making it an expensive winter/spring.

FRUIT

Lemon – Spanish supply has been challenging, heat from the summer has reduced fruit size and the skin finish isn't as we would like, making them look scruffy. We've had to switch supply to Egyptian early where we have much better size juice content and clean skin. As we've moved earlier some fruit still has a green hue about it but this will disappear as the season progresses.

Easy peelers – As with lemon, similar issues due to weather mean we are having to use a mix of Moroccan, Italian and Spanish supply to maintain availability, quality is much improved of late.

Orange is still from the southern hemisphere, and quality is good.

Spanish blood orange is expected mid-January



TIME SAVING PREP... We have a great range of prepped produce; from sliced and diced veg, to fruit salads. Check out our range online or contact our team for more info.

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EXOTICS

Sugar snaps & mangetout – Mainly Kenyan with Egyptian now being seen. Egypt will become more prominent in the new year.

Beans – Egypt is supplying the majority of beans, along with Kenya. Kenya will take over as main supplier from February, with Rwanda as a backup.

Butternut squash – Mainly Portuguese but the heat in August is creating some shelf life issues. Spain is also there as a backup before we move to southern hemisphere supply in February.

Asparagus (large) – Peruvian supply, quality is good with no concerns.

Asparagus tips & baby corn – Growing conditions are ok in Thailand but supply is difficult due to a lack of flights where we are still only seeing arrivals on a weekly basis.

Baby vegetables – Very Challenging from South Africa due to flights. Spain is being looked at as a source closer to home for supply. France is also helping with baby leek and fennel over Christmas but will finish in new year.

SEASONAL MENU INSPIRATION:

Creamy Sprout & Nduja Bake

Here's a great, simple and quick recipe from our friend Chef Martin, to avoid waste and turn leftover sprouts into a delicious dish!

Find this recipe and many more on our website oliverkayproduce.co.uk and follow us on Instagram to see our recipe videos!

Ingredients

480g Blanched sprouts - leftovers	6ml Olive oil
100g Finely diced onions	80g Nduja
300ml Cream Sauce	
40g Mixed Grated Cheese	

Method

1. Slice the sprouts in half and set to one side
2. Heat a pan and add the oil, onion and nduja and cook down until golden brown
3. Mix with the sprouts and cream sauce and then place into a baking tray, top with grated cheese and bake until golden

EXOTICS cont...

Chillies – Spanish with some Moroccan will take us through winter. Quality is good.

Sweet potatoes – Honduran have just finished, main crop Egyptian is now underway and the quality is good.

Figs – Brazilian supply, quality is good for Christmas.

Mango – Brazilian Tommy Atkins are good, Brazilian expected to be supplied throughout winter.

Limes – Mainly Brazilian and good quality. No problems foreseen

Garlic & ginger – Availability of Spanish garlic is much improved. Ginger is good quality, mainly Chinese and no problems with supply.

Banana shallots – New season French, quality is very good. We are no longer stocking round shallot due to lack of demand.



For enquiries or more information about any of the products mentioned in the Crop Report, or to place an order, please contact our team who will be happy to help:



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