

## ripe & ready

### Kirsty Cranitch

**A** GOOD supply of plump, juicy Sydney rock oysters is available now, says Vicki Jaggard of Morgan's Seafood at Scarborough. Mud crab supplies are picking up and fresh bay prawns continue to be available, and some ocean kings are being delivered as well. "We expect a lot of prawns to kick off early next year because that's the prawn season, but there'll still be plenty around for Christmas," she says.

Fresh reef fish including saddle tail sea perch, gold band snapper and

barramundi are in good supply, and Rainbow Beach is producing a good haul of angel shark (flake).

On the conventional fruit and vegetable markets this week, David Faranda of Naturally Fruit at Taringa says consumers will be spoiled for choice this Christmas.

"Stone fruit, mangoes and salad vegetables are in good supply," he says.

If you'd like to try something different, an interesting hybrid to emerge from Stanthorpe is the plumcot, a cross between a plum and an apricot.

Faranda's advice is to be picky to

avoid buying flavourless stone fruit. "They might look good, but ask your greengrocer what they taste like – they should have a good idea of what they're selling," he says.

Peter Kedwell of Rocklea Market wholesaler Pershouse Produce says the rain has been positive. "With the change in climate patterns more water is available, resulting in the fruit supply we're seeing," he says. "Fruit shops are telling us they're down 10 to 20 per cent in dollar turnover compared to the same time last year because of the value of stock."



Faranda says bananas and sweet potatoes continue to flood the market and tomatoes are coming down in price rather than increasing as predicted.

Wilson plum lovers should get in while they can as the small, sweet fruit is peaking right now and will

finish before Christmas.

On the organic market, Ross Cowling of United Organics says rain will help growers next season.

Cowling says the heat may have been bad news for organic celery which went to seed, but it has boosted apricot supplies from Swan Hill.

Small, good-eating Wilson plums are in sporadic supply and all varieties of melons abound.

Russian garlic is new to the organic market, and pricey but popular red capsicum is in good supply.