

Kirsty Cranitch

YELLOW-flesh nectarines and peaches from Swan Hill are hitting the market and are really sweet and juicy — an unexpected bonus this early in the season, says Ross Cowling of United Organics.

All organic stonefruits have come back in price, but cherry supplies have dwindled because a major grower has been “frosted out”.

Plum supplies also have declined because of the drought.

On the conventional market, Peter Kedwell of Pershouse Produce says the week's big news is a product glut,

halving the price of pumpkin. Kedwell says fruit is abundant and of good quality for Christmas. Cherry quality is improving as southern crunchy varieties replace softer ones.

Stanthorpe plums, white flesh nectarines and peaches are appearing, and Coffs Harbour is supplying good value blueberries.

Lychees, *pictured right*, are also coming to market. David Faranda of Naturally Fruit in Taringa says the new season fruit will vary in price according to seed size: “The bigger the seed, the cheaper the fruit and vice versa,” he says.

Faranda says blackberries, redcurrants and raspberries are all

coming on and Queensland figs continue to arrive.

The first organic Bowen mangoes arrived last weekend, and Kedwell says R2E2 mangoes from Bowen and north Queensland are here as well. “These are the large, red-skinned varieties you can cut cheeks off like a steak. When you're ready to eat one, wait another three days because it will gain natural sugar as it matures.”

Cowling says organic Victorian strawberries are still plentiful.

Victoria is also supplying good quantities of broccoli, reducing its price in the process.

Other organic vegetables in good supply are asparagus, gourmet round

and cherry tomatoes, zucchini and Stanthorpe iceberg and cos lettuce. Aside from dutch creams, Cowling says organic potato supply has been poor.

“Normally Gatton supplies our potatoes but the drought caused a mineral deficiency which showed up as a brown fleck inside the potatoes and reduced size and yield,” he said.

Good supplies of conventional salad vegetables including cherry and field tomatoes, lettuces and continental cucumbers continue. Faranda says local Hass avocados are starting to wind down, and will be replaced by varieties from New Zealand and Victoria.

