

# ripe & ready

## Kirsty Cranitch

**F**RUIT, vegetables and seafood are all plentiful at the moment with the weather continuing to warm up and the end of the six-week fishing closure.

Vicki Jaggard from Morgan's Seafood says there's a good supply of sand crabs, ocean king prawns and scallops from Hervey Bay and Bundaberg. Crustaceans like Moreton Bay Bugs will start arriving in the next few weeks as part of the by-catch.

Reef fish continue to be good buying and both wild and farmed

barramundi are in good supply.

A plentiful fruit and vegetable season lies ahead, despite the literally stormy start. David Faranda of Taringa's Naturally Fruit says there are enough growers to absorb the damage caused by recent hail, but they're being selective about water allocation during the drought, and this resulted last week in the early Halloween pumpkin sell-out.

Early stone fruits like apricots, yellow peaches and white-flesh nectarines are now good, sweet eating. Grapes are tart in flavour, but should be sweeter in a few weeks.

Both Peter Kedwell from wholesaler Pershouse Produce and

Faranda say Northern Territory mangoes continue to be well-priced this week, and Stanthorpe cherries are also coming on.

Faranda says pink ladies are the best apples to eat right now but refrigerate immediately because they've been in cold storage.

Rockmelons, watermelons, pawpaws and pineapples are well-priced.

Field mushrooms and Gatton brown onions are good for barbecues, and broccoli is well-priced and good quality. Lebanese cucumbers, truss and cherry tomatoes, beetroot and hydroponic lettuces are also good value.

Faranda says wombok cabbage is in prime condition, great for crunchy noodle salads, and Kedwell says green vegetables that were costly a few months back are now well-priced and plentiful. He advises lettuce will increase in price because local suppliers have stopped production due to warmer weather.

Ross Cowling of United Organics says hass avocados are plentiful, and well-priced mangoes should arrive next week together with pawpaws and cherries. Sweet, juicy Valencia oranges have replaced the navels.

Organic asparagus is still good value, cucumbers and eggplant are in good supply but broccoli is scarce.

