



vegu-september-4-peach-palaver-and-paleontology.MP3

Gary Crawford: [00:00:00] Music to slide us into today's fruit-iferous subject.

[00:00:02] Voiceover music

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:11] Although Georgia's known as the "Peach State", California and South Carolina both produce more peaches than Georgia.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:18] Well that burst my bubble, doesn't it?

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:20] It sure does!

Gary Crawford: [00:00:21] That's Kayla Johnson. And yes, it does. Chief Veg-U-cator here a Veg-U-cation Tent of the Agriculture Department's Farmers Market in Washington D.C. She's here talking with the customers and late season tourists about peaches. Although Kayla I don't think Lauren there was really singing about peaches the fruit you know we're... Not talking about prunus persica which I still think sounds like a Roman Emperor or something.

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:44] But that name was given to peaches because they thought that peaches were originally from Persia.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:52] Which is modern day Iran. But actually, near as anybody can tell, where is the apparent birthplace of peach?

Kayla Johnson: [00:00:58] Originally peaches are from China.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:02] Where many scientists say peaches were grown some 4000 years ago and through the silk trading routes those peaches made their way to Persia and the Greeks and the Romans later spread them all over Asia and Europe between 300 and 400 B.C. And Kayla you say peaches come from that big family of plants, what was that thing again?

Kayla Johnson: [00:01:20] That rosaceae family. And they're botanically known as a droop.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:25] Yeah, I've been called that too.

Kayla Johnson: [00:01:25] Yes!

Gary Crawford: [00:01:26] You don't have to be so enthusiastic about it. OK go on ahead.

Kayla Johnson: [00:01:30] So they have that one seed in the center which is where they get that name stone fruit. That seed is not edible. There are some members of the rosaceae family such as the almond where it is the seed that we eat.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:46] Oh now I remember the rosaceae family. Didn't they reboot that old show briefly with Roseanne and the whole family? But wait a minute what were we talking about?

Kayla Johnson: [00:01:56] Peaches!

Gary Crawford: [00:01:56] Oh yeah, I'm sorry. And just like my mental powers, peaches seem to have been going through a long-term decline as far as consumption goes at least in this country. Kayla, you looked back 38 years, what did you find?

Kayla Johnson: [00:02:06] In 1980, the annual consumption per person for peaches had been thirteen pounds.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:13] So 13 pounds in 1980, that was the peak and it's been going down ever since I looked it up. We are now down to under six pounds per person.

Kayla Johnson: [00:02:21] So good we're talking about peaches here today to get people eating them some more so hopefully we'll get that consumption up.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:27] I'm afraid what we're doing may bring it down even more anyway. Experts say part of the decline is that production in the US is falling. Some farmers have been switching out of peaches and into other crops that may be more profitable. And some of the decline may also be many of us consumers may not really know how to buy the best fresh peaches for top quality and taste and how to use them. We are out of time now, but next time, Kayla can we get into how to buy and some great ways to use those peaches?

Kayla Johnson: [00:02:54] Yes.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:54] All right this is Gary Crawford reporting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Next time much more about peaches!