



## COOSEMANS SHIPPING OF LOS ANGELES

2820 East 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Vernon, CA 90058

Tel. (323) 588-1127 Fax. (323) 588-7723

[WWW.WESHIPPRODUCE.COM](http://WWW.WESHIPPRODUCE.COM)

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### **Menu Planning for April**

If you're planning your menu for April there are a few holidays to consider and many fresh fruits and vegetables making their entrance for the spring.

#### **Plan for April:**

Full Moon on April 25th is called the Pink Moon.

National Garden Month, National Frog Month

and National Poetry month!!

Flowers of April: Daisy and Sweet Pea

- April 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> – Passover continues
- April 7<sup>th</sup> – World Health Day

- April 15<sup>th</sup> – Tax Day
- April 16<sup>th</sup> – National Eggs Benedict Day
- April 22<sup>nd</sup> – Earth Day
- April 26<sup>th</sup> – Arbor Day

#### **Plan Ahead for May:**

Full Moon on May 25th is called the Flower Moon.

May is National BBQ, Egg, Strawberry and Salad Month!!

- May 1<sup>st</sup> – May Day

- May 5<sup>th</sup> – Cinco de Mayo
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> – 139<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Derby
- May 12<sup>th</sup> – Mother's Day
- May 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> – National Restaurant Show
- May 27<sup>th</sup> – Memorial Day observed

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- Start adding fresh greens and more herbs to brighten the palate (and the plate!).
- Introduce delicate baby vegetables and petite items to mirror the growing seasons.
- Add early flowers; nasturtiums, pansies, marigold confetti to salads to brighten them up visually and contribute a slight pepper flavor.
- Pea tendrils and fava tops (tips) both have a more delicate version of the flavors of the items they'll grow into later in the summer.
- Alliums and fresh legumes become prominent contributors to the menu options.

April is always a little sketchy as spring crops are very weather dependent and don't have a strong hold on the earth yet. Transitions between growing regions add to the confusion and chefs need to be able to be flexible; write specials that can accommodate changes and encourage customers to embrace the season. Wild-craft harvests of Morels, ramps (very scarce this year with the warm temperatures nationally), fiddleheads (the western fiddleheads started mid-March, eastern begin in April) and stinging nettles can add some seasonal splash to the menu. The month opens with Passover and closes with Earth Day and Arbor Day, think of planting a fruit-bearing tree in your green space.

This month is one of the few times that truly delicious peas and carrots are feasible to serve together. The peas are much more delicate than most people believe as they are filled with natural sugars that convert to starch within hours. If they are picked too soon, the inner peas are small and don't have much yield, if they are picked too late, they are large and starchy and not very palatable. But when they are picked just right – what a wonderful spring treat!! Be sure to cook the carrots first and then add the shucked peas at the last moment with a little bit of mint and fin au beurre (or finish with butter). If you can't get or keep enough good English Peas in your walk-in, consider using Snap or Snow peas on your menu. A great way to write this as a menu item would be '*legume*



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*d'jour'* and then your choices could also include fava beans and fava tips when these delicious green spring veggies become available.

April is also the unofficial month of the *allium*. Spring onions, green onions, green garlic, ramps, garlic scapes, baby leeks, chives – all delicious versions of this branch of the lily family. Spring onions can be found red or white, these segue into torpedo onions and Cippolini – combine any of these flavors with delicious oil, thyme and *fleur d'sel*. Roasting only makes these delicious roots richer in flavor, but they are so young and delicate there is not yet a sharp onion flavor. Think about pickling green onions or baby leeks for a summertime Bloody Mary treat... Green garlic and ramps are wonderful ways to celebrate the season as they are both so fleeting. In New England, a classic combination of flavors is sautéed shad roe and ramps – with maybe a few fiddleheads and morels. Remember the adage – “...if it grows together, it goes together.”

As a chef and a diner, there are two important factors to remember when ordering, prepping and eating these items: Spring products are very delicate - the starches, sugars and flavors can shift quickly depending on when they were harvested and how they are stored; seasonal items are short-lived celebrations of the shift in season, enjoy them when they are available because frozen morels and ramps are poor substitutes for the fresh item.

Cherries and other stonefruit should begin in May with earnest ....Spring Porcini also becomes available....Generally Cherries start on Mother's Day and continue through Father's Day.



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Remember that the items in **BOLD** will prove to usually be better values as they are in their peak harvest or storage period.

### **Planning for April:**

|                            |                           |                            |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Artichokes</b>          | Feijoa                    | Papaya                     |
| <b>Asparagus</b>           | Fennel                    | Passion Fruit              |
| <b>Avocados</b>            | Fennel, Bronze            | <b>Peas - English</b>      |
| <b>Baby Artichokes</b>     | Fennel Pollen             | Peas - Sugar Snap          |
| Baby Carrots w/ Tops       | Fiddlehead Fern - Western | Pea Tendrils               |
| Baby Mixed Root Vegetables | Garlic – Elephant         | Pears – Bartlett (imports) |
| <b>Beans, Fava</b>         | <b>Garlic – Green</b>     | Pineapple                  |
| <b>Beans, Fava tips</b>    | <b>Garlic – Scapes</b>    | Potatoes - Fingerling      |
| Beans, Green               | Ginger                    | Potatoes-Purple            |
| Beets                      | Guava                     | Potatoes-White             |
| Blossoms, Orange           | Greens - Dandelion        | Potatoes-Yukon Gold        |
| Blossoms, Lemon            | Greens - Arugula          | Raddichio                  |
| Broccoli                   | Hearts of Palm            | Rambutan                   |
| Broccoli Rabe              | <b>Horseradish</b>        | Ramps                      |
| Cabbage, Napa              | Jicama                    | Radishes                   |
| <b>Cactus Leaves</b>       | Kiwano Melon              | <b>Rhubarb - field</b>     |
| Carambola                  | Kohl Rabi                 | Spinach                    |
| Cardoon                    | Leeks                     | Spinach - Bloomsdale       |
| Carrots                    | Lettuce – Iceberg         | Spinach-Baby               |
| Cauliflower                | Lettuce – Leaf            | Squash - Baby              |
| Celery                     | Lettuce-Baby (all)        | Squash – Yellow Crookneck  |
| Celery Root                | Lettuce – Miner's         | Squash – Zucchini          |
| Chayote                    | Lettuce-Spring Mix        | Stinging Nettle            |
| Cherimoya                  | Mangoes – Manila          | Star Fruit                 |
| Citrus – Blood Oranges     | Mangoes, Ataulfo          | Sunchokes                  |
| <b>Citrus – Kumquats</b>   | Merleton (Mirliton)       | Strawberries               |
| Citrus - Grapefruit        | Mushrooms - Chanterelle   | Tamarillo                  |
| Citrus – Meyer Lemon       | Mushrooms – Morels        | Turnips                    |
| Corn – new crop Calif.     | Mushrooms - Porcini       | Watercress                 |
| Cresses                    | Onions – Cipollini        | Watermelon                 |
| Dandelion                  | <b>Onions - Young</b>     |                            |
| Eggplant                   | Oranges – Navel           |                            |
| Endive – Belgian           | Oranges – Valencia        |                            |