



Stone fruit is the master of self-promotion.



They start their campaign early with springtime buds, flirting their way into your gaze and leaving behind a desire for a juicy, ripe mouthful of sun-warmed fruit. Stone fruit is as sexy as fruit can get because it makes you want it long before you can have it.

In this issue, words by Megan and drawings by Jess.
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The General was founded in 2009 by Jess Driscoll and Megan Westerby. Each issue is hyper-focused on a single food noun. Find the archive at:
jessdriscoll.com/thegeneral/

I didn't have opinions on stone fruit until I moved to Los Angeles. Grouping stone fruit into a category, a category of fruit I should have opinions on, just never occurred to me.

Citrus fruit is the star of fruit categories, catalogues devoted to its splendor, but stone fruit is different. If you live somewhere where the only stone fruit you can purchase is trucked in there's no reason to have opinions on stone fruit, as your options are likely limited to peaches, apricots, and cherries.

But, really, it comes back to the pluot. Pluots are as varied as heirloom tomatoes, some with similar color patterns, and prompt similar speculation as to the creation and production of different strains. How many generations removed from an apricot or a plum is this delicious mouthful? A good pluot make me want another immediately after, all while begging me to ponder its heritage.
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But in Los Angeles? In Southern California? Stone fruit opinions are plentiful, so you either develop your own or absorb others'. Sure, everyone knows about SoCal's citrusy history. You can pluck lemons and grapefruits and oranges off neighborhood trees if not your own.

But the secret treasure of SoCal is the pluot, the unlikely but delightful hybrid of plum and apricot that has a short, defined, and delicious season in which it should be consumed.

Once you've discovered the pluot you discover the intricacies and delicacies of other stone fruit, the differences between peaches and white peaches, the joys of the nectarine, the secret stealth of the cherry thought of as a berry but truthfully the jewel of the stone fruit realm. Technically, olives and dates are stone fruit, meaning there's a three course meal concept based around stone fruit out there just waiting to happen.

Once you understand the pluot, the mysteries of the world of stone fruit unlock.

In SoCal, the pluot is the gateway drug to seeing stone fruit with fresh eyes. To caring about the storage conditions of your fruit haul. To understanding ripeness and seasons and the long wait for the right time of year, the mellow success of the correct season, and the desperate scramble to get the last of the good stuff before your final impressions run the risk of being of mealy, too--late harvested.