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Clarine Long and Albert Trabont, sales people, at Gravins.

## Seasonal supermarkets

By DIANE HUBEL

FARMINGTON — Although there are few real working farms left in Farmington, and most of the farmers have moved out of the area or gone into other fields, there are still a few places in the city where a naturalist can get some real farm fresh produce.

A few of the open air stands in the area, like Paul Button's, and Floyd Howard's, specialize in apples; others carry everything from flowers to beans.

Gravins, which is on 13 Mile and Halstead, has one of the widest varieties in the area.

Not only does it have the usual assortment of corn, pumpkins, and flowers, but it also has a tiny stand on the premises where shoppers can buy a hamburger and eat at picnic tables under the trees.

ACCORDING TO Joseph Gravlin, owner of the stand, most of the produce sold in the stand is bought from other farmers.

Gravins, which is open through the summer, closes after Halloween, then re-opens in December to sell Christmas trees.

"Actually the whole concept is out of date," Gravlin said, "but I guess it still fascinates people so they still shop here. Actually, we would like to get out of the business. We've been here for over 30 years, and its time we quit."

Buttons orchard on 12 Mile Road, specializes in apples, cider, and honey.

The apples are grown on his own farm, the honey comes from Walcott Lake.

The Buttons have been growing apples on their land for the last 150 years.

The barn at the back of the stand is used by the city of Farmington Hills as a volunteer fire department station.

"Actually, there's a lot of work involved with growing fruit," Paul Button said. "Probably a lot more than there is with other produce. You have to trim all winter, spray all summer, and pick all fall."

Mrs. Eva Taylor, a West Bloomfield resident is a regular at Buttons.

She comes, she said, because she likes the cider.

"I love apple cider, and I think the Franklin Cider mill has just gotten too commercialized," she said. "This place has a lot more character."

According to Button the Macintosh apples are the best right now, but the Jonathans will also be ready for picking in a week or so.

For people who like to buy apples by the bushel and save them, he suggests that they be left in a cold place, 32 degrees or lower to last the longest.

Floyd Howard, on Howard Road near Halstead is also an apple man.

At Howards the customer can pick his own or buy them already picked.

The crop at Howards was so heavy this year he had to prop the branches up to keep the apples from dragging on the ground.

Just outside of Farmington Hills, on Grand River, in Novi, there is another produce stand that carries a wide variety of produce.

GRIMES PRODUCE stand has been in business for the last 22 years, but the present owner, Harold Perry, just began running it in 1971.

Grimes is one man who grows most of his own produce.

"Its beginning to get slow, now," he said. "This is really the end of the season, but we still pick fresh what we can every morning. The things that we do not grow ourselves we buy locally."

Although there are still a few summer fruits like strawberries and melon in the stand, there is also an abundance of huge pumpkins, gourds, and some Indian corn.

One customer, Van Cleave who was shopping with his wife and his daughter, Patty, said he has been shopping at Grimes for the past 12 years.

"We like shopping here, their prices are competitive, and their produce is good," he said.

Aside from the usual produce many of the stands also sell dried flower arrangements, Indian corn, and in some cases, even bitter sweet and potted plants.



Patty Cleave and her father Van, admire the Indian corn at Grimes produce stand in Novi.



Eva Taylor buys a gallon of cider from Paul Button.



Howard Perry, owner of Grimes market.