



FORDE ABBEY & GARDENS



Increasing Consumer Choice at Forde Abbey

Novelist Samuel Butler, in praise of strawberries, declared that "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did." While he might agree Forde Abbey Fruit Farm owner Julian Kennard would probably also put in a good word for gooseberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants and jostaberries all of which he grows at his Pick Your Own farm near Chard. But it is the strawberries that he has been spending most time with recently adding an exciting new variety to his strawberry crop.

"There are many different types of strawberries and all with slightly different qualities," Julian explains. "Shape, ripening time, colour, and, most important, flavour and sweetness all vary and we wanted to offer greater choice to our customers". Enter Christine, an early cropping English variety, with beautiful large orange-red berries with a wonderful flavour. Juicy and sweet it is bound to be a firm favourite this year.

Also grown at Forde Abbey is Elsanta, the strawberry of choice for the supermarkets. Julian defends the much-maligned Elsanta, "Some people think it is flavourless but that is because of the way it has to be grown for the supermarkets. Don't underestimate the pressure that supermarkets put on growers to produce higher yields with longer shelf lives at lower prices. We grow them for taste, to be eaten fresh, almost from the plant – and we even have a charity box to ease the consciences of those who have done just that!"

Both of these varieties are resistant to bruising making them easier to pick. Not that strawberry picking is difficult at Forde Abbey anyway with well-spaced rows of table-top grown plants and pre-picked fruit available.

The farm will be open daily, 9.30am-6pm (weather permitting) from the 18th June with strawberries, including Christine, and gooseberries ready to pick. Raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants and jostaberries will ripen as the season continues. Please call 01460 30341 to check availability and to order ready picked fruit.

End

For Editors

Contact: Julian Kennard or Hannah Galvin

01460 220231

hannah@fordeabbey.co.uk

Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset, TA20 4LU

Forde Abbey& Gardens

***Enjoy England Awards for Excellence – Silver Award 2008
South West Tourism's Small Visitor Attraction of the Year 2006 & 2007***

Gardens Open daily throughout the year 10.00 am - 4.30pm

House Open 12 noon – 4pm Tues-Fri, Sun & Bank Hols 1st April – end Oct

Signposted from A358 Chard/Axminster, A3066 Bridport/Crewkerne, A30 Chard/Crewkerne