

Shop Local This Holiday at the Wintertime Farmer's Market

For this year's gift giving, enterprising shoppers might skip the malls and hit the Wintertime Farmers Market at Hope Artiste Village, where local, healthy, and tasty meet.

It's the place to go to make a colorful, fresh dish for tonight's party, but the offerings extend beyond the fresh vegetables and fruit. Just ask Mark Kavanagh, of Fairland Farm, who cannot say enough good things about the farm's dried cranberries. Their 18-month shelf life makes them great to keep on hand for those last-minute gifts, assuming you can resist the temptation to eat them yourself.

"The market accepts cash, credit, and debit," says Sarah Lester, market manager. You can purchase Fresh Bucks in \$5 gold coin increments or a decorative gift card that will surely please the localvore on your list. These gift cards can be used year-round and never expire.

For the budding cook/scientist in your life, pair a Farming Turtles grow-your-own-mushroom log with a jar of Poblano Farm Brontosaurus Kids' Pasta Sauce to use when the 'shrooms are ready. Add a bottle of bubbly from Yacht Club Soda, the official soda of Rhode Island, and a box of honeycomb from Aquidneck Honey, which owner Betsy Restituyo says "can be eaten like candy," and your young friend will be ready to celebrate in local style.

Package a bottle of Cranberry Rosemary Vinegar with a bag of Edible Yard's fresh cranberries for the gourmet chef. Add a copy of "Rubies in the Sand," the cranberry cookbook, for extra delight. Seafood lovers will appreciate the packaged scallops from Bomster Scallops, and meat or poultry lovers will be happy all winter long with a Winter Poultry CSA subscription or Meat Money Shares from Pat's Pastured.

Need a stocking stuffer? Stop by the Virginia & Spanish Peanut Co., which is celebrating its 100th anniversary next year. Fourth-generation owner Shelley Kaloostian-Conti's favorite is the cashews, but she doesn't hesitate to recommend any of the dried fruits and nuts.

Visit the Wintertime Farmers Market on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or on Wednesday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hope Artiste Village in Pawtucket to grab some fantastic gifts for the food lovers on your list while supporting your local farmers.