



## Hot stuff

- **Growing jalapenos?** Try this recipe for easy stuffed peppers. You will need four slices of bread (chopped into crumbs), ½ small onion, 2 tbsp cheese (tasty, parmesan or similar), fresh basil or parsley, pinenuts and salt and pepper.
- **Slice the jalapenos** in half length-wise, leaving the stem intact, and scoop out the seeds and membrane. Mix the stuffing ingredients and fill the chillies.
- **Place on an oven tray**, filling side up, and bake at 180°C for about 20 minutes.
- **To make red pepper dip**, you'll need two red capsicums, one red jalapeno, 250gms cream cheese and 1 tsp ginger.
- **Grill the peppers** until their skins are blackened and bubbled. Put in a plastic bag until cool, when the skins can be easily removed. Blend all the ingredients in a food processor. Chill before serving.
- **For more ideas**, check out Orcona's website, [www.chilli.co.nz](http://www.chilli.co.nz)



now he's producing 100kg of exotic mushrooms each week. "I decided it was all or nothing," he says.

Aimay grows oyster mushrooms in straw that has been pasteurised in hot water. The spores are added to the straw, which goes into "large punching bags" that hang from the roof for easy picking.

Aimay says oyster mushrooms taste best sautéed in butter, or in an omelette. "The simpler, the better," he says.

### Scott's strawberries

Locals will tell you that Billy Scott grows "the best strawberries in the Bay" – and their stone fruit comes a close second.

Scott's Strawberries was set up 40 years ago by Billy's parents Colleen and Bill. Their Havelock North property is home to 180,000 'Pajaro' strawberries, rows of raspberries and salad crops and an orchard of nectarines, peaches, sweet, crisp sugar pears (they're similar to Nashi pears) and rarely-seen peacharines.

Peacharines, as their name implies, have all the sweetness of a ripe, juicy peach without the fuzz – their skins are

**Above: The Hastings Farmers' Market. Left, top and bottom: Orcona Chillis 'n' Peppers' condiment range includes New Zealand's only locally-produced sweet manuka-smoked paprika.**

as smooth as a nectarine. They ripen in February, but unfortunately, they're an unreliable crop. "In wet weather the fruit falls off and it also marks badly in wet conditions," Billy explains.

Strawberries offer sweeter returns – and if you're growing your own, Billy says the key is not to plant them too late. "Get them in the ground before the shortest day so they can get their roots down. The later you plant them, the later they crop." And if you want strawberries for a special occasion, here's some insider knowledge: in spring they take six weeks from flower to fruit, but in the peak of summer, that reduces to three and a half weeks. 🌱

### Visiting the Hastings Farmers' Market

*The market is held every Sunday at the A&P Showgrounds, Kenilworth Rd, from 8.30am–12.30pm. Ph 06 877 1001.*



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