



FROM OUR FARM TO YOUR KITCHEN

# Jersey Farm Produce

**Glen Garner, NJ**

For thirty years, the family farm of Hector Perez's childhood was owned by another farmer. When the farmer retired, he offered to sell the land back to the Perez family. Today Hector's brother runs the farm in Mexico where they were raised.

**h**ector Perez grew up on a farm in Veracruz, Mexico, and spent many childhood days with his grandfather as they walked the fields together. "We grew tomatoes, peppers, black beans, and sweet corn -- but mostly mangoes," Hector says.

He decided to study agricultural engineering in college, where he had his first experience growing in a greenhouse. He focused his studies on poinsettias, and by working with the flowering plant, he came to love the greenhouse environment. "When you grow in a greenhouse, you plant the seed and then you watch the plant everyday. Outside there can be too much rain or too much sun, and the plant may not survive. Inside the greenhouse, it's all on you. The care you give reflects the plant you get," he explains.

After college, Hector got a job working for Masaca, a flour and corn processing company in Mexico. At Masaca, he was a supervisor who focused on quality control. "But when I learned about farmers markets in the United States, I decided to move here to work on my English," he shares (in perfect English).

Once in the U.S., he began selling produce from



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*- Hector Perez*

Philips Farm in Milford, New Jersey at New York City farmers markets. Before too long, Phillips offered him a job on the farm, and eventually, Hector was able to begin farming his own land. Today he grows a wide range of produce on 97 acres, as well as in his farm's 13 greenhouses. His expertise in season extension allows him to offer a delicious variety of produce throughout the winter.

"I like the way we live," says Perez, who has a wife and a son. "It's also nice for me to see how much people enjoy the food we grow, and that makes me like to grow everything," he says.



173 Main Street, 3rd Floor  
Ossining, New York 10562

914.923.4837 tel  
914.801.2336 fax

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