

Meet the Farmers: Anthony Caltabiano

Caltabiano Farms Phoenix N.Y.



“Garlic is very photogenic,” says Anthony Caltabiano, who cooks at least one braid a month.

“Garlic comes from the heart!” With a hearty chuckle, Anthony Caltabiano’s passion for the product he proudly displays at the Downtown Farmers Market shines through.

Caltabiano Farms has been a staple at the Downtown Farmers Market for decades.

“We’ve done it for generations. I can honestly say, I’ve been coming all of my life,” he says. “You really have to have your heart in farming. I took it for granted when I was younger, but I have an appreciation for it now.”

That appreciation has firm roots, thanks to a work ethic Anthony inherited from his mother. “She also had the gift of gab, and I inherited that,” he chuckles again.

Anthony says it takes nine months to grow the best garlic. The Caltabiano family plants theirs across ten acres in Phoenix every October. “It’s very tedious labor to get it to grow right.”

The garlic stops growing around late December, just after the longest day of the year. “Then, it sprouts up in the spring and blesses us with a nice little bulb,” Anthony says. “We start harvesting the crop in July.”

Market visitors will find two kinds of garlic at the Caltabiano Farms stand: Stiff Neck and Soft Neck.



“Where the Stiff Neck Garlic tends to be larger and prettier, the Italian Soft Neck has more of a purple tinge. It grows like an onion. When it matures, the neck gets soft,” Anthony explains. He says one of the most common misconceptions people have is that they think the product goes bad when it gets soft, but that’s not true. Anthony promises it’s still very flavorful.

Anthony says he easily cooks through a braid of garlic each month. “When I cook, I generally cook two to three cloves. My kids have always asked, ‘Dad, are you going to put potatoes in with that garlic?’”

As the Farmers Market season continues, visitors will also find fresh radishes, carrots, spinach, lettuce and more at the Caltabiano Farm stand. Eventually, Anthony wants to plant sweet corn and grow bigger onions on the land. Though he has a full time job in addition to his time on the farm, he actually looks forward to the extra hours he puts in.

“I tell people this is my golf course. People like to golf, they say it’s very relaxing and pleasing,” he says, likening the time he spends on his tractor to time others spend on the green, even when darkness falls. “This is very relaxing and pleasing to me. I watch the deer come out, I watch the coyotes come out... It’s just fun.”

Anthony treasures his time interacting with customers at the Downtown Farmers Market as well.

“I enjoy the interaction with people. You’d think you’d get tired of the same questions about garlic, but you can tease them,” he says. “I have fun with that. They say, ‘I already picked my garlic, when is a good time to pick it?’ and I say, ‘Well you answered your own question, obviously I’m not the garlic expert, you are’ The interaction with people is really fun.”

Anthony invites you to share your recipes with him when you visit him at the Downtown Farmers Market. Though he admits he is rarely surprised, he loves to hear what customers add garlic to.

“I’m always interested in hearing the recipes because my mom always incorporated garlic into whatever we ate,” he says with a smile. “I don’t care if it’s beans, I don’t care what it is – I like to incorporate garlic. It just has a nice flavor.”

Make sure to say hello to Anthony when you visit the Downtown Farmers Market!

