

# FAQs from the Grants Pass Growers Market (June 2016).

Revised August 2016

Unlike other FAQ sheets that include multiple subjects, this document will attempt to be singular in nature and reflects a growing interest in the Growers Market by our community's creative and entrepreneurial crowd. Thank you in advance for your interest in the Growers' Market and regardless of the outcome, congratulations for taking this step. This FAQ goes something like the following:

**Q. Hello, what are the requirements and fees to be a vendor at the Growers' Market?**

Or, often asked another way;

**Q. How can I get into the Growers' Market?**

Or, Oscar the Grump might ask;

**Q. I saw an empty space in the Growers' Market last week, can I have it?**

Or, some other flavor of this same type of inquiry.

The question deserves a serious response so please stay with us and read this entire answer. To appreciate the success of the market it is important to understand a little of our history, our purpose and our operating rules.

**HISTORY AND PURPOSE:** Thirty-six years ago the first iteration of the Grants Pass Growers Market was created. It was formed by a small group of like-minded farmers that saw urbanization and sprawl as a threat to the limited arable land being held for agricultural production in the Rogue Valley. Those intrepid souls envisioned a local market as a venue that could mitigate the economic hardships associated with small scale farming by selling agricultural products directly to the consumer. Farmland was being gobbled up by developers hungry for small scale farms with flat ground to turn into mini-ranchettes. Small scale farmers were desperate to find a solution to their economic hardship and selling off little bits and pieces of their farms was appealing at the time. With the advent of the Growers' Market a land use crisis was averted and farming's economic hardships relieved. Small scale farmers found a new revenue stream that allowed them to stay on the land and keep that land in agriculture production rather than selling it off for residential development. That's the Reader's Digest version of our history and purpose. So today, we have a thriving market that offers our customers and community, the freshest and arguably finest locally grown produce in the region. Simultaneously, the Grants Pass Growers' Market offers small scale producers an opportunity to reap enough economic benefit to stay in the farming business. It truly is a win-win proposition.

**OPERATING RULES:** the Grants Pass Growers' Market is a Membership Association made up of three vendor categories; growers/farmers /producers (Primary Agriculture), foodies (Prepared and/or preserved Food) and crafters/artisans (builders, seamstresses, creators, artists, jewelers, rock hounds, metallurgical fabricators, etc.). Each member has voluntarily applied for membership and depending on their category (see above) has had their products subjected to a certain level of scrutiny and/or evaluation (referred to as JURY) prior to acceptance into the Association. ALL products that are non-agriculture in nature must have an agriculture-related theme to qualify for membership. "Agriculturally-related" has a wide variety of definitions, so do not be shy about talking up your particular specialty/recipe/creation/artwork/build out.

***ONLY MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SPACE IN THE GROWERS' MARKET (Summer Season).***

It follows that aspiring members (that would be you) are subject to the same evaluation process (JURY) that existing members were subjected to. **ALL NON-AG PRODUCTS THAT YOU WISH TO BRING TO GROWERS' MARKET (Summer Season) MUST BE SUBJECTED TO JURY – MUST BE HAND-CRAFTED BY YOU, THE APPLICANT. NO! REPEAT, NO! RESALE OF ANY KIND IS PERMITTED IN THE MARKET. NO COTS (COMMERCIAL OFF THE SHELF) PRODUCTS ALLOWED.**

**INSURANCE:** Insurance is required in order to participate at the Growers' Market. A General Liability Policy is required for ALL Members.

**FOODS:** Product Liability Insurance is required for ALL members offering processed food products (e.g., salsas, food-ready-to-eat, baked goods, smoothies, ice cream, jams/jellies, tamales, gyros, pizzas, etc.). All food products must be prepared in a "Certified Kitchen" with Health Department approval/inspection, and food preparers/handlers must have Food Handler's licenses. These documents (Liability Insurance and/or Product Liability Insurance, food handler's licenses, Kitchen inspections, etc.) must be made available to the market before attending Summer Season Growers' Market, Winter Market or a Jury event.

**JURY:** typically, the JURY process events occur only once at the very beginning of every year and winning applicants are invited to apply for membership. Once the annual JURY process is completed (January/February time frame) and all new memberships awarded and accepted, the market is closed to new members until the following year. Normally, NO mid-season memberships are awarded (exceptions are occasionally allowed with PRIMARY AGRICULTURE applications). This process is an annual event and depending on re-enrollment rate of the membership, the Jury panel considers aspiring members with an eye toward filling vacancies created by exiting members. Frequently, the introduction of a new product surpasses the expectations of the judges and a new member is invited even when no vacancy exists. Products that have previously not been present in the market are encouraged. There are cases where aspiring members apply several times (over a period of several years) before they are finally accepted. If you apply one year and are rejected do not despair. There will be other opportunities to reapply. Applying multiple times is not viewed in a negative light but rather as an elevated level of commitment and determination.

Submitting an application mid-season is not recommended. Mid-season applications that are received without advanced permission will be held on file but no further processing will occur until the end of the year. Adhering to this JURY process may seem foreign and perhaps even unfair at times but it is a major driver behind our long term success. So bear with us. This is not an "ole boys" network, rather it is an association that values product quality, business commitment and personal persistence. While many successful businesses started out as hobbies in the market, the JURY panel looks most favorably on the applicant with eye towards operating as a business.

So, receiving this FAQ is a pretty clear indication that you missed the JURY process for this year and if you are still interested in Summer Market you will have to demonstrate some of that dedication and determination by staying in touch with the Market Manager via email and expressing to him/her your long term interest for membership in the market. At the end of every summer season the Growers' Market manages the Winter Market at the Fairgrounds. That Winter Market is the next and best opportunity to participate with the Growers' Market.

**EXCLUSIONS:** THREE THINGS ARE PROHIBITED IN THE MARKET: RESALE; POLITICS; AND RELIGION. THE MARKET ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LATTER TWO SUBJECTS AND RESPECTS EVERYONE RIGHT TO PRACTICE FAITH AND SPEECH FREELY, BUT THE MARKET IS NOT THE TIME OR PLACE FOR EITHER. SO, PLEASE RESPECT OUR RULES AND REFRAIN FROM ASKING.

**WINTER MARKET:** Due to demand from the current membership, Winter Market with the Grants Pass Growers' Market is closed to outside vendors for this season. The JURY process for the 2017 downtown market will be held during the Winter Market.

In the past, JURY involved a single, one-day event where ALL aspiring vendors brought their wares to one location to be displayed on a table top display (4' x 2' = 8sq.ft.) and submitted their products to the Panel of Judges for evaluation. This year we are returning to that format with the only significant difference being that the JURY event itself will be held at the Fairgrounds and may or not be held in conjunction with an open market day.

**COSTS:** Pretend for a moment that you have gone through the JURY process, received approval and have been invited to join the Southern Oregon Growers Association (Growers' Market);

**Q. How much does it cost?**

A. Annual membership dues to the Growers' Market cost \$65. Space rents this year will be \$25 per space, per Saturday.

That is subject to change at any time without notice. Annual dues are usually paid at the Mandatory Annual Members Meeting in the January/February timeframe. If you cannot make it to the mandatory Annual Members Meeting to pay your dues you may pay in advance. If you miss the meeting and forget to pay your dues on time (or in advance), you are late. If you are late in paying your annual dues, the cost is \$100.

**Q. How big is a space and how much does a space cost?**

A. A single wide space (10' wide) cost \$25/day.

The outdoor Saturday Growers' Market is located in the City parking lot on the corners of 4<sup>th</sup> St. and F St. Spaces are the length of a parking space (varying by location, but approximately 20 feet long) by 10 feet wide. The painted parking space lines are NOT the location of the vendor spaces. There are smaller symbols and numbers painted on the pavement that demarcate the vendor spaces. Vendors are expected to keep their equipment (tents, tables, products) inside the demarcation lines.

SPACE: The empty spaces in the market are not indications that those empties are available. They just mean that one or more of our regular members did not come to market that week. Often, members in good standing take time off for personal reasons or because their particular specialty is not yet ready for market.

This is a horrendously incomplete list of answers that have been asked on this subject in the past. You would be up all night if I included everything (3 pages is quite enough, thank you!). This FAQ was created as a starting point for you (the aspiring member) to get familiar with the how, why, when, where, who, and what(s) of the Grants Pass Growers' Market. If your questions (and answers) are not covered in this FAQ, feel free to email, call or otherwise contact the market manager. I am happy to take all your questions.

Best Wishes,

Bob Schaller  
Market Manager