

THE DESTIN LOG

“Off the Vine delivers something fresh in Destin”

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A new way to shop organic has sprouted in Destin. Consumers can now shop Off the Vine.

In operation since July of 2002 in Atlanta, the idea to deliver produce right to the consumer's door was born in a conversation on the back of a pick-up truck.

Shana Wolf and farmer Jerald Lightsey in Alpharetta, Ga., were realizing that people were having a difficult time getting produce at peak freshness.

Shana and two partners, Cecilia Smith in Atlanta and Carol Elam in Nashville, decided that they could deliver fresh conventional produce as a service.

When it became more available, Wolf decided to go strictly organic with the produce that they were delivering.

“I really feel that people are looking for clean food,” Wolf said. “For that, organic is about the only way to go.”

A year ago, Wolf and her husband relocated to Shalimar, giving Wolf the opportunity to offer organic produce delivery to our area.

Destin customer Gileah Taylor discovered Off the Vine when an Internet search for Destin farmer's markets led her to the company's Web site.

Taylor wanted to begin buying her produce at the farmer's market, but with a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter and another one on the way, she found Off the Vine to be more practical for her family.

“I love it,” Taylor said. “Every week, it's something new to try.”

Taylor and other customers use Wolf's service because they can be completely sure that the produce is organic and they are supporting local farmers.

“Whatever is in season is what you get, so you are not getting anything that was forced to be grown,” Taylor said.

The boxes delivered by Off the Vine are packed by people that wear hair nets and gloves to keep the produce as contaminant free as possible.

The selections are carefully packaged individually in paper and often with a frozen water bottle to keep the temperature right. Food is delivered within 3 or 4 days of coming out of the ground.

Off the Vine even throws in a recipe sheet to give customers cooking inspiration for their produce.

Consumers have avoided organic produce in the past, because it is more expensive than conventional produce in the grocery stores.

“It’s a lot more hands on with organic,” Wolf said.

One of the philosophies at Off the Vine is that they “would rather eat properly now than take pills later in life,” so the extra expense is worth it.

Wolf says that she is “extremely against” genetically-modified produce, like food grown with seeds that already have pesticides in them.

Wolf gives credit for being able to distribute organic produce to the local farmers who go through the lengthy and rigorous process of getting their farms cleaned up to USDA standards.

For more information on getting organic produce, breads, dairy, juices and other products delivered to your home, visit www.offthevineproduce.com.

