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CONTACT: Pegi Adam, 973-744-6090 pegi@mountsnow.org
Jerry Frecon, 856-307-6450 frecon@rcrc.rutgers.edu

**EARLY SPRING PEACH BLOSSOMS MADE GOOD JERSEY PEACH CROP
'Peach Party' celebrations throughout Garden State during August**

Clayton, NJ (Apr 21, 2010) -- "It was a good winter for peaches -- not too cold but just right to foster an abundance of flower buds on New Jersey's peach trees," says Jerry Frecon, agricultural agent with Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension, Gloucester County. "Early blooming trees took many growers by surprise, but our trees know when it is time to wake up, flower, and begin producing tiny peaches."

New Jersey is the fourth largest peach producer in the country, with more than 70 varieties of white- and yellow-fleshed peaches and nectarines grown in 80 orchards throughout the state. The fruit begins to appear in markets from mid-July and is generally available through September. The height of the season, August, is proclaimed "Jersey Fresh Peach Month" by the governor.

To focus attention on what many consider the sweetest fruit of summer, the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council (NJPPC), the state's primary resource for everything related to peach growing and marketing, is sponsoring its third annual "Peach Parties," from the end of July through August, all over the state. Community farmers markets, restaurants, farmstands, supermarkets and community festivals will celebrate locally grown peaches with a variety of special peach events. Farmers markets and farmstands will offer family-oriented activities, give tastings of different varieties; restaurants will offer special peach dishes or entire peach menus; supermarkets will hold cooking demonstrations and recipe contests.

The 29th annual New Jersey Peach Festival and Gloucester County 4-H Fair, July 22-25th, will kick off the official peach season (although there will be varieties available from July 4th) with displays and prizes for "the best," and selection of a 2010 "Peach Queen." Peach experts at Rutgers may also be staging other peach educational events, where the public is invited.

Information on all things *peaches*, including a calendar of events, listings of participating entities, recipes from restaurant chefs and more can be found on the NJPPC website www.jerseypeaches.com

For further information, contact the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council information office, 973-744-6090, pegi@mountsnow.org or Jerry Frecon, 856-307-6450 frecon@rcrc.rutgers.edu

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