



## Fincel Sweet Corn

550 West Kroll Road, East Dubuque, IL 61025;  
Find them on Facebook under Fincel Sweet Corn

### LOCATIONS AND HOURS\*

#### DUBUQUE FARMER'S MARKET

Their stand is at the corner of 12th & Iowa Street, May - October  
Saturdays, 7:00 am to 12:00 Noon

#### FINCEL'S WEST SIDE MARKET

East Kennedy Mall Parking Lot, July 3rd to September 20th  
Mon - Fri: 8 am - 5 pm, Sat: 9:30 - 5 pm, Sun: 9 am to 5 pm

#### FINCEL'S EAST SIDE MARKET

Highway 20 Right onto Frenress Lake Rd, East Dubuque  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm - Sun - Fri

\* Closing times may be earlier if the day's produce is sold out.

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Cash or Check



## FINCEL'S SWEET CORN by rich belmont

Frank Fincel IV (Pronounced FIN-cel) will be the first to tell you his farm is a family business. It was started by his great grandfather, Frank in 1888, and continued by his grandfather and father, Franks II and III. Like his predecessors, Frank has been growing corn all his life; for over 50 years now! Today the farm is operated by himself and his wife, Carol, and his sons Frank V and Craig. Even Frank V's wife, Sarah is fully involved. (pictured below). In addition to raising two sons, Frank VI and Colden, she is always experimenting with new crops in her huge home vegetable garden.



The farm consists of 100 acres and is located in East Dubuque, IL right along State Highway 20. You can see some of the fields under the Frenress Lake water tower. There are 70 acres under corn and the other 30 are producing approximately 26 types of produce. Everything

Fincel sells is grown in East Dubuque. There are 40 employees including a 16 person corn picking crew.

Over the years, Fincel has sold fresh produce to most area restaurants and grocery stores. They are currently supplying corn and vegetables to Pepper Sprout and Woodfire Grille to name just a couple.

Tornadoes and hailstorms worry farmers. However, these weather events at their worst might wipe out an entire season's crops. By contrast, flooding washes away top soil and once it's gone it cannot be replaced. The recent rains are the worst downpours Frank can remember. He estimates the farm has lost 15% of its fields. Gullys washed away top soil and a contractor had to be hired to fill them in so the farm hands could get back into the fields.

Fincel is known for its ability to deliver consistently good sweet corn year after

year. This type of corn has higher sugar content and is considered to be more tender than field corn. It can even be dried and popped and is as delicious as the popcorn varieties, just not as fluffy. Their corn season is July 4th to September 25th.

Frank is often asked to explain why his corn is so good. He says it is the result of a combination of things:

The Fincels are always looking for ways to improve on their 122 years of experience.

Every year seed company representatives offer them between 20 and 30 new hybrid varieties to test. They try about 16 experimental corn varieties each season.

They have learned to stay with bi-color corn since it provides a consistently tender and sweet taste.



Frank V does all the groundwork preparation and Frank IV does all the planting himself. In fact, he does about 30 separate plantings per year allowing for a new field to be ready for picking every other day.

Fortunately there are no other corn growers within a quarter mile of their fields. This means they do not have to be concerned with cross wind pollination from other varieties.

The corn is picked every day rain or shine. It is never sold after the day it is picked. Unsold corn is donated to local food banks or thrown into the compost pile.



The 16 person picking crew begins gathering the day's crop starting at first light between 5:00 and 5:30 am. Automatic corn pickers are not used enabling the crew to check each ear and to immediately eliminate any bad ones.

The picked corn is kept cool and out of direct sunlight. The longer corn remains in the heat the faster its natural sugar will turn to starch.

[www.Dubuque365.com](http://www.Dubuque365.com)



Frank recommends you buy the corn on the day you are going to eat it. Do not leave it in your car for extended periods and do keep it refrigerated until you are ready to cook it.

Carol says she receives many questions regarding the cooking and freezing of corn, too. She suggests you follow the following Fincel Preparation Methods:

**Cooking:**

1. Bring water to a boil
2. Place ears in water
3. Time for six minutes after water returns to full rolling boil
4. Remove ears from pot and enjoy!

**Freezing:**

1. Blanch ears in boiling water for two minutes.
2. Remove them and plunge in ice water until cool
3. Place on towel and let dry
4. Store in freezer bags in freezer

Besides corn there are approximately 26 other vegetables produced on the farm. The growing season begins in January. Some plants are placed in Frank's kitchen and dining room in order to give them a head start.

The selling cycle begins in May. First flowers are available along with asparagus, the first vegetable of the season. The primary crops are corn, tomatoes, four varieties of muskmelons and five different kinds of watermelons. Secondary crops include strawberries, cucumbers, two bell peppers and five hot peppers, Norland Red and Yukon Gold potatoes, onions, eggplants and zucchini.

Tomatoes are grown both at the beginning and end of their season in greenhouses. They are field grown all summer. Tomatoes are never allowed to touch the ground. They are held up with the Florida Stake and Weave System. This



means a stake is placed next to every other plant and twine is weaved through the branches. Frank says this is hard labor and explains why he has young sons in business with him.



The Fall crop season arrives in September and October. This is the time to stock up on pumpkins, squash and gourds. The months of November, December and January are devoted to farm equipment repairs and maintenance.

Frank wants to take this opportunity to thank all his loyal customers for their support every year. He would also like to dispel a few persistent rumors. There are no Fincel farms in Alabama, Arkansas or Missouri. The tomatoes are not trucked in from elsewhere. They are all grown in East Dubuque. So are the musk melons. They do not come from Muscatine!



The Fincel family is devoted, maybe even obsessed, with making sure you have fresh corn and produce on your dinner table. Ironically they themselves have no time for family dinners between May and October. As Frank likes to say his produce keeps on growing. It has no respect for week-ends and holidays!

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