



Saigon leaves market opened for Tet

Once a year, the leaves market is opened on Cach Mang Thang Tam Street in HCMC's Tan Binh District on the 20th of the last lunar month to sell dong (Phrynium placentarium) and banana leaves for wrapping banh chung and banh tet, the traditional Tet (Lunar New Year) sticky rice cakes of Vietnam.

Leaves available at this market mostly come from the Central Highlands province of Lam Dong and the southern province of Dong Nai.

Apart from leaves, vendors sell lat (bamboo strings) and square wooden molds for making banh chung.

Le Minh Quang, a vendor who has been selling leaves at this market for more than 15 years, said a bundle of dong leaves costs between VND40,000 (US\$1.8) and VND120,000 while a bundle of lat is priced at VND5,000- 8,000 each.

Tran Thi Ngoc Anh, a dong farmer in Lam Dong who has brought her products to the market for the first time this year, said she has sold over 10,000 leaves to retailers at the market within just three days.



Dong leaves are sold in bundle. After customers choose the bundles they want, buyers will cut off the stems and give customers the leaves only.



Tran Thi Ngoc Anh, a wholesaler, said she has brought the leaves to the market from Lam Dong Province.



Banana leaves are sold at the market for making banh tet.



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