

Thursday, June 10

Is there a place for sweet potato ice cream?

The humble sweet potato will ignited hot debate this week when ice cream featuring the root vegetable is served to more than 1000 people at the nation's annual Hort Connections event in Brisbane.

Developed by the grower-owned Research and Development Corporation Hort Innovation, the ice cream features a sweet earthy flavour and a half serve of veggies per two scoops.

Bundaberg growing outfit Sweet Potatoes Australia general manager Claire Maslen said producers are continuously looking for ways to diversify their offering to health-conscious Aussies and encourage the consumption of home-grown produce.

"This is an exciting time to be in the sweet potato industry," she said. "While the root vegetable remains a staple next to the meat and three veg on Aussie dinner plates, it's also emerging as a versatile basis for chips, baked goods, and now - we never thought we'd see it, ice cream."

Ms Maslen said any effort to cut food waste is also positive: "The development of this ice cream and other products definitely has the potential to help us use veggies that would traditionally be considered 'too ugly' for sale in a fun and interesting way."

Hort Innovation sweet potato advocate Samantha Parker said sweet potatoes are packed with nutrients.

"This sweet potato ice cream contains vitamin B5, which is needed for mental performance and to combat tiredness," she said.

Ms Parker said [Australian Bureau of Statistics data](#) shows 96 per cent of the population do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables each day (five to six serves).

She said sweet potato is also a surprisingly rich source of vitamin C.

"Vitamin C is important for immunity, but it's also an antioxidant, which means it's good for overall health, collagen formation and the absorption of iron."

Sweet potatoes are available year-round in Australia. According to the [Hort Stats Handbook](#), more than 106,000 tonnes of the root vegetable is grown in the nation each year with 88 per cent produced in Queensland. Major production areas are Bundaberg and Rockhampton.

For more information on Hort Connections, go to the [event website](#). For more Sweet Potato ideas, head to [Good Mood Food](#).

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