



Schnucks, Monsanto Launch 'EverMild' Onion

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Schnuck Markets and Monsanto Co. have teamed up to bring St. Louis consumers EverMild onions, a new U.S.- bred and -grown sweet onion variety. Available for the first time this month and in the fall and winter thereafter, the new onion offers reduced tearing and a milder taste when slicing and eating.

The onions will be available in the St. Louis-based grocer's stores through the end of March, with in-store sampling and demonstrations planned over the next several weeks at a number of Schnucks locations.

"Our goal is to make sure that Schnucks customers have their pick of a variety of produce offerings throughout the year," said Michael O'Brien, VP of produce and floral for the 106-store grocer. "Our buyers have sweet onions coming in from across the globe in every season, but from February to when the Vidalia becomes available in April, there has been a gap in the availability of domestic sweet onions — until now."

O'Brien said the EverMild is a domestically grown onion that is understated and effectively extends the season for those who like to eat and cook with sweet onions.

The partners' inaugural crop of EverMild onions delivers multiple benefits, including a natural sweetness and mildness that maximizes flavor and a low "bite" that expands cooking options. The new onion variety takes its sweet disposition a step further by muting the levels of the enzyme that causes tearing when the onion is sliced or cut.

David Stark, VP of consumer traits at Monsanto, which is also based in St. Louis, explained that the company's vegetable seed business developed the yellow EverMild onion using traditional plant breeding. "Monsanto is focused on bringing innovations to vegetable growers and the consumer," said Stark. "The high quality of the EverMild brings consumers a great-tasting, mild onion for their favorite dishes."

Until recently, the only sweet onions available in the United States during the winter were imported from Latin America. EverMild onions are grown in the Pacific Northwest where the dry climate and sandy, low-sulphur soils are optimal for growing the best sweet onions. Because they don't spend weeks in the hold of a cargo ship being transported from Latin America, EverMild onions look better and stay fresher longer than imported sweet onions.

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