

Adirondack reds are not experimental potatoes

Thank you for the wonderful article publicizing Schenectady's year-round farmer's market. It is great to see increasing demand for locally grown, high-quality, freshly picked fruits and vegetables, and other farm products.

Supporting local farmers is good for the local economy and helps keep farmland in production. In the larger view, it also helps reduce the carbon footprint of our daily living by decreasing the "food-miles" required to put food on our tables. Kudos to everyone involved in expanding Schenectady's farmer's market.

Also, I would like to suggest that there is nothing "experimental" about the Adirondack Red potato being sold by Barber's Farm of Schoharie County. The red-skinned, red-fleshed potato variety was developed by Dr. Walter De Jong at Cornell University.

After making sure that his breeding plan included the usual production characteristics of yield, maturity, disease and pest resistance, and physical appearance, he set about the unusual task of adding flavor and culinary qualities.

Field trials confirmed his success with all of the above characteristics, even flavor.

When Adirondack Red was officially released in 2004, it was categorized as a specialty variety due to its color, and it was marketed to home gardeners, farmer's markets and farm stands, chefs at high-end and boutique restaurants, potato connoisseurs and gourmet cooks.

It had already been through many years of field trials to establish that its characteristics had been locked in and were true to the variety.

I would argue that the Adirondack Red is well beyond its 'experimental' stage and is indeed an accepted, well-characterized potato variety which is becoming increasingly popular in the specialty potato markets.

I realize that growing Adirondack Reds at Barber's Farm may be an "experiment" at Barber's Farm, but this is not made clear in the article. My main point is that "experimental" food is not being sold to the public, especially at farmer's markets and farm stands, where quality and safety are of paramount importance to both producers and consumers.

Richard E. Tucker

Tucker Farms, Inc.

Gabriels

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