

Better tasting cantaloupe: Wal-Mart teams with Bayer to breed hardier fruit

Wal-Mart says it typically sells 10 times more cantaloupes in June, when it can buy from U.S. farms, than it does in December, when the melons are grown farther south.

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The retailer teamed up with seed experts at German agriculture giant Bayer AG to help develop a bespoke melon that's pleasing to the palate but still tough enough for the trek from warmer climes.

Wal-Mart considered more than 100 varieties of seeds and tested 20. Wal-Mart employees spent six months grading the cantaloupes on attributes like flavor, texture and aroma.

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The winner was dubbed the Sweet Spark, after the yellow sunburst in Wal-Mart's logo. The designer cantaloupes are available in 200 U.S. stores with a full roll-out planned for fall [2017]. Sweet Spark is not genetically modified.

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It's "very rare" for a retailer to invest in the exclusive development of a new variety of fruit, according to Rabobank International produce analyst Roland Fumasi, though growers often cultivate new breeds and offer them to a retailer for a short period.

For now, Wal-Mart has exclusive rights to sell Sweet Spark. The company will try to negotiate a long-term arrangement with Bayer. If that falls through, it's possible the cantaloupe variety could be sold at rival retailers.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Wal-Mart Just Created a Designer Cantaloupe](#)