

**Niagara researcher breeds sweet potato designed
to grow in the Canadian climate**

They say the variety, called 'Radiance,'
can make it to harvest in about 100 to 120 days

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Valerio Primomo, a research scientist and vegetable breeder at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, has developed "Radiance," a variety of sweet potato with a shorter growing season. (Credit: iStock/Getty Images)

A researcher based in the Niagara Region is ramping up production of a made-for-Canada variety of sweet potato.

Since 2013, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre in Lincoln, Ont. has been testing thousands of sweet potato crosses supplied by Louisiana State University.

Researchers have now narrowed down the selection to find the perfect fit for the Canadian climate.

They say the variety called "Radiance" can make it to harvest in about 100 to 120 days, meaning they can come off the field before the frost hits.

Prior to the breeding of Radiance, however, Canadian sweet potato growers relied on slips from the U.S., often in short supply once American farmers' orders are filled, the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre said in a post to the Greenhouse Canada web page. They say "the potatoes also require long growing seasons, which can be elusive on this side of the border."

In the post, the Innovation Centre said "The hope is Radiance will be ready for harvest in time for Thanksgiving and offset some of the nearly 66 million kilograms of sweet potatoes imported into Canada to keep up with demand."

Valerio Primomo, the Vineland research scientist who bred Radiance, said in the post that "In order to commercialize our variety, we had to develop that (slip) industry here."

"We know that sweet potato is a Thanksgiving product, at least in the U.S. Now it's a big thing in Canada. Retailers like Loblaws want to hit that market because they'll sell a lot of it at that time of year," says Primomo.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/niagara-researcher-breeds-sweet-potato-designed-to-grow-in-the-canadian-climate-1.5056006>