

# Goldenberry – superfruit, can be grown in the US

South America's goldenberry is poised to be a new superfruit for North American consumers, but a USDA-funded study shows they can be grown in the US.

Rutgers University plant biology researcher Edward Durner is starting the second year of research into goldenberries as a crop for farm market and community supported agriculture in the north-eastern US.

Goldenberries (*Physalis peruviana*) are an annual crop. The fruits are yellow and tart with a unique tropical flavor, tasting “like a mixture of pineapple, strawberry, sour cherry and citrus”. The yellow fruit sometimes can be seen through a translucent, golden brown husk. They are closely related to ground cherries and tomatillos, and can be grown much like tomatoes, peppers or eggplant, started indoors and transplanted to a field after frost.

The fruit is thought to be catching on with North American consumers. Food processing giant Nestlé a year ago bought a majority stake in Terrifertil, the world's largest buyer of goldenberries. A news release from Nestle called the goldenberries “an Andean superfood high in vitamins and antioxidants.”

“This investment allows us to strengthen our presence in fast-growing categories such as plant-based foods, beverages and healthy snacks, known as ‘superfoods’ due to their high natural nutrient content,” Nestlé Zone Americas CEO Laurent Freixe said in the release.

Durner also has noticed goldenberries popping up on cooking shows, at least once as a “secret ingredient” in a chef competition. A marketing effort in the US, the American Pichuberry Association, has also trademarked the name “Pichuberry” for goldenberries and would support growers that would adopt Pichuberries as a new crop.

The excitement over a new superfruit is worth growers' attention because currently they are not grown commercially in North America, Durner said: "I think they have potential to be grown anywhere in North America."



In the first year of Durner's research, growers in the Northeast tried growing the berries. There was a problem with growers receiving the seed in time for planting, but those growers who had enough season to harvest the ripe fruit did have some favorable reports. The plants are vigorous and need space to grow.

"They need to be at least 5 feet apart in the row," he told [fruitgrowersnews.com](https://fruitgrowersnews.com) (<https://fruitgrowersnews.com/article/goldenberry-new-superfruit-grows-in-us/>). "They need to be probably 7-9 feet between rows. These plants will fill that space up. They're a pretty large plant. They could become 10 feet wide in circumference and they easily get to 6 or 7 feet tall."

During his second year of research, 116 growers in the Northeast and Midwest are planting goldenberries and sending him their feedback. Goldenberries need a long season to grow but if planted in time can be harvested in September and early October.

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