

Wheatgrass Business Takes Off

Wheatgrass by the glass is in hot demand, according to Kevin Keune, Shiocton, Wis. Advocates of the health food drink made from ground-up wheat sprouts claim two ounces is equivalent to the nutrition of 2 lbs. of fresh vegetables.

Keune grows and sells wheatgrass juice, seed, flats of grass, juicers and other supplies. He also offers consulting services to prospective growers. Since selling his first six bottles this past March, his business has been growing 10 to 20 percent each week.

"I quit my full time job in June, and we are getting close to replacing my previous income," says Keune. "Currently, we water our production by hand, but we are looking at a sprout growing machine that could grow up to 800 lbs. per week."

He's going to need the increased production. After the Green Bay Packers began buying his juice for the team, players' wives began ordering it for themselves. Business growth has all been by word of mouth, he says.

"Every customer that has tried my wheatgrass juice has stayed with me," says Keune. Keune is excited about the product and the business. He sells juice in 8-oz. bottles for \$13 each, 10 by 20-in. flats of ready to cut wheatgrass for \$9, and precut flats for \$10. At the recommended consumption of 1 oz. per day, a bottle lasts about a week, while a

precut flat will produce about 12 ounces of juice. He says growing wheat grass is something that anyone can do, whether for themselves or commercially.

"I have people wanting me to ship wheatgrass juice, but that's not a good idea," says Keune. "It's expensive to ship because you have to have ice, and it's cheaper to just grow your own. It only costs about 10 cents per oz., and a good hand powered juicer costs only about \$100."

Keune encourages people who are interested to visit his website for simple growing instructions. Materials to get started are inexpensive and can be ordered from Keune on his website or from other vendors.

"There's no reason any person working out of their home, can't turn it into a profitable business," he says. "Get the materials, and start growing it. From that, you will learn and identify the questions you need answered."

Perhaps a sign of the growing interest in wheatgrass is that a quick search of the internet identifies 65,000 websites that mention, discuss or sell information and products related to wheatgrass. It is an interest that Keune feels has lots of growth potential in North America.

"In Australia, there are juice bars on every street corner, and companies there have developed very sophisticated growth chambers



Kevin Keune bottles his wheatgrass health food drink fresh and teaches others how to market the juice, which has a 14-day refrigerated shelf life.

for wheatgrass," he says.

Keune is already consulting with wheatgrass growers in ten states and four countries. Part of what he is teaching for a price is his ability to market his juice with a 14-day refrigerated shelf life.

"There are lots of people growing wheatgrass lots of different ways and selling the grass or dehydrating it," he says. "As far as I know, we are the only ones bottling it fresh."

He credits the shelf life and quality of his wheatgrass to the use of a liquid supplement called Ocean Grown. The

supplement is concentrated seawater. He adds one gal. to 99 gal. of water. He now offers the concentrate to his customers in pint, gallon and 50 gal. containers and promotes it as an important part of his wheatgrass production strategy.

"I started watering sprouts with it and could see the vibrancy, texture, color and taste improve," he says. "Now it is part of our proprietary technology."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kevin Keune, Make Scents, Shiocton, Wis. 54170 (ph 920 986-3319; website: www.growngreens.com).

Interest Growing In Hybrid Hazelnuts

"The future of the world is nuts."

That's the slogan at Badgersett Research Farm near Canton, Minn., which specializes in a special new crop - Hybrid Hazelnuts.

Researcher and entrepreneur Phillip Rutter is looking for people and companies willing to invest in the new crop and grow along with what could turn into a big new industry.

Europeans eat about a cup of Hazelnuts per week because Hazelnuts are often used instead of almonds and peanuts.

In the U.S., Americans eat about 2 nuts per year because Hazelnuts aren't grown widely.

Hazel oil is about 70 percent mono-unsaturated and can be used as a cooking oil

with a long shelf life. It can also be turned into "hazel diesel" for burning in diesel engines. The nuts contain vitamins E and B6 and are high in protein. The meal, left over after oil extraction, can be used as a pastry flour and even as livestock feed.

Hazelnut bushes can be planted as windbreaks or snow fence with the added benefit of producing income. They reach a maximum height of 15 ft. during their 50-year life span.

Hazelnut bushes have a growth pattern that's similar to the lilac bush and they thrive in most soils. They start producing nuts in their 3rd year and reach full production in their 4th.

The shrubs need to be kept free of weeds and some critters do eat them. Although few insects damage the bushes, weevils tend to

attach to the nuts.

Harvesting nuts is a labor-intensive task for small operations because the nuts need to be removed from the husks before marketing.

"This is not yet a crop for people looking for a 'turn-key' operation. We've demonstrated all the necessary pieces of the puzzle but scaling up and expanding the crop in different regions always brings risks and surprises," Rutter says.

Rutter sells different kinds of Hazelnut plants through his website.

The National Arbor Day Foundation in Nebraska City, Neb. also has a project established with Rutter's hybrid genetics and can provide information regarding Hazelnuts.



In Europe and Asia, Hazelnuts are used like peanuts and almonds in the U.S.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Badgersett Research Farm, R.R. 1, Box 141, Canton, Minn. 55922 (email: BadgersettInfo@aol.com; website: www.badgersett.com); or The National Arbor Day Foundation, 211 N. 12th, Lincoln, Neb. 68610 (ph 800 448-7337).

They're Selling Bugs On eBay

By Shelly Mende, Faribault, Minn.

Last summer my 12-year-old daughter was given an early school assignment to complete while on summer vacation. She was to collect 30 species of insects for a science class.

She diligently started collecting bugs and putting them into an unmarked container in the freezer. I accidentally threw them out. By the time school started, I was afraid she wasn't going to have enough for the project.

Since I like using the internet, I did a Google search and learned that people on eBay sell all kinds of bugs.

Some people sell expensive collections neatly displayed in cases. But other people just sell dead bugs. I won an auction for 19 butterflies with a \$6.95 bid plus S&H. The fully formed butterflies came in a box neatly laid out on a piece of quilt batting.

But my daughter was upset. She thought it was cheating because she didn't catch the



A Minnesota mom discovered there's a market for bugs on eBay.

butterflies herself. Once school started, she asked her teacher if it was okay if she had insects in the project that she didn't get by herself. Her teacher didn't care how she collected the bugs, as long as she had enough. In fact, my daughter ended up getting an A+!

My thought after it was all over: People are making good money selling a product you can find anywhere!

New Farm Co-Op Markets Specialty Soybean Products

A group of about 200 Mich. soybean producers are adding value to their product by processing their own beans for human consumption.

The "Thumb Oilseed Producers" are making cooking oil, low fat soy flour and soy grits.

The products are non-GMO, which sets them apart in the marketplace so they are not competing directly with the giant processors. It also makes them more attractive to Europe and Japan.

According to plant operations manager Don Booms, the coop's unique extruding process leaves 3 percent oil in the refined soybean product, improving the taste.

The coop's flour and grits are used in the food industry as additives to reduce the overall carbohydrate level. And their cooking oil has no trans fatty acids and no cholesterol because of a more natural style of physical processing.

"We're also certified to process organic



This soy cooking oil has no trans fatty acids and no cholesterol.

soybeans so a portion of what we sell is marketed as organic," he says. "Our biggest strength is that we have our own raw material. That's the main idea of the whole thing - we want to be our own middleman and that means it's more profitable for our members."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Thumb Oilseed Producer's Cooperative, 2145 Leppke Rd, Ubyly, Mich. 48475 (ph 989 658-2344 or 866 658-2344; fax 989 658-2372; email: thumboilseed@hotmail.com; website: www.thumboilseed.com).