

## Modified Crop Pays A Premium

A California company has created a genetically modified variety of safflower that produces an oil sold as a nutritional supplement. Farmers lucky enough to have contracts to grow it are getting a premium for the new crop.

"We modified safflower to produce a special oil called gamma linolenic acid (GLA)," says Jeff Burgau, Arcadia Biosciences, Inc. "Currently borage and evening primrose are the main sources for GLA. However, GLA content in those oils is quite low. It would require consuming a lot to get the supplemental benefit. Our safflower has twice as much GLA as either of them."

GLA has earned a reputation for fighting inflammation of joints, suppressing appetites and improving skin tones.

Normally grown as a dryland crop, the

new modified variety has enough added value to make it worth irrigating. "Currently we're producing all we need because it doesn't take that many acres to satisfy current demand," says Burgau. "We're working with other crops to find ways to get higher levels of valuable oils."

Burgau encourages farmers to stay aware of developing markets for nutraceuticals like GLA and crops that can produce them. The company is also working on genetically modifying crops to be salt tolerant and to make more efficient use of water and nitrogen. For example, Arcadia has already demonstrated a canola that uses only a third as much nitrogen, but yields the same as conventional canola.

While the company isn't contracting additional acres at this time, Burgau insists they still want to hear from interested



**Created by a California company, this genetically modified variety of safflower produces an oil that's sold as a nutritional supplement.**

farmers.

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## BBQ Grill Cleaning Service

"It's unique, and there is little to no competition," says Jeff Krentzman, owner of The BBQ Cleaner™, a franchise business service cleaning BBQ grills. "There is a market with people who own high-end gas grills and are willing to pay to have them cleaned."

He discovered the eco-friendly cleaning system popular in the UK and Australia, and decided to bring it to the U.S. For less than \$20,000, he provides a fully equipped trailer with enough cleaning solution for 100 jobs, plus marketing material and a guide on how to start a business.

Owners of The BBQ Cleaner™ system charge between \$100 and \$200 per service,

which takes 1 1/2 to 2 hrs. Some customers who grill often request cleaning as often as three or four times a year, Krentzman says.

He has sold about 70 units in the U.S. and Canada, and each system is custom built. Krentzman travels to the customer to provide training.

"It's very turnkey. You get everything you need," he says. "Our operators around the country comment to us that they enjoy the ability to work from home, set their own schedule and be their own boss."

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**Jerry Krentzman started up a franchise business that cleans high-end gas barbecue grills. He provides operators this fully equipped trailer with enough cleaning solution for 100 jobs.**

## "Underwater Livestock" Pays Off For South Carolina Farmer

Clay Chappell of Southland Fisheries thinks of Hybrid Bluegills as "underwater livestock" that pays off like the 4-legged variety on land.

The cross between a coppernose bluegill and a green sunfish can be sold to fish markets or to provide recreational fishing in farm ponds.

"They are voracious feeders, very hardy and tougher than bluegill or other panfish breeds. They grow a little faster, and for those who fish, they bite hooks aggressively and are an excellent table fish," Chappell says.

It's one of the breeds Southland Fisheries raises as fingerlings for customers who live within a 500-mile radius of Hopkins, S.C. The 1 to 2-in. fingerlings sell for 40 cents each and are delivered in oxygenated, insulated tanks. Typically, operators stock them at 3,000 fish/acre. Fed the right fish pellet ration, the fish are ready for harvest in about a year, at about 8 oz. each. Local markets retail the bluegill for \$4.50 to \$6.50/lb.

"Most of our customers start the fish in the spring to get the full benefit of the growing season," Chappell says.

They have done very well in the states around South Carolina. But he thinks the hybrid bluegills would also do well in colder areas after watching them continue to eat through this past winter's coldest weather when other fish went dormant.



**Hybrid Bluegills are a cross between a coppernose bluegill and a green sunfish.**

The biggest issue with raising the hybrid bluegill is that the pond needs to be drained or sterilized every two or three years before adding a new crop of fish. Though they are hybrid, the fish are not sterile. The offspring they produce aren't suitable for food and don't grow very well – they are often cannibalized by the adults. The offspring that survive must be eliminated so they don't compete for food with a new batch of fish.

Despite that challenge, Chappell sees potential in the market.

"Until recently, there has been zero supply of bluegill for food fish and I think there's a good market for it. If you have marginal land, you can put in a pond," Chappell says. "Even from just a recreational standpoint they are good to catch and eat."

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## Garbage Disposal Used To Make Olive Oil

A California couple has come up with a method to make olive oil using a garbage disposal. The process is described by "Dee Dee," an online blogger who told us she prefers to remain anonymous, at her website, www.ohhshop.com.

They wanted to figure out how to make oil from the fruit of an olive tree on their new 5-acre property. Dee Dee was surprised how little information was available on the Internet. The most help she received was at the farmer's market where she sells vegetables and homemade products. Someone told her the olives had to be ground into a mash.

Dee Dee's husband came up with the idea of using a garbage disposal. It had to be powerful enough to "grind bone," so they spent \$300 on a good model.

The couple picked 5 gal. of olives, then washed and removed stems and let them air dry before running them through the disposal.

"It had no problem whatsoever grinding up the olives and pits," Dee Dee says.

To release the oil from the mash, they mixed it with a heavy-duty kitchen mixer with a dough hook for more than 30 minutes.

"You'll see pools of oil along the sides, which means it's ready for pressing," Dee Dee wrote in her blog. "Don't skip this step; the press won't work otherwise."

She and her husband purchased a \$120 press from Harbor Freight, but Dee Dee notes that they could have made one for a lot less.



**Garbage disposal, left, is used to grind up olives and pits into a mash and hydraulic press, right, extracts the oil.**

"Press smaller portions at a time in several thin layers," she suggests.

The couple used a plastic bin with a hole in one end to drain the oil into jars. It was mixed with bits of pulp, and they let the oil rise to the top for about an hour before using a turkey baster to remove the oil. The final step was pouring it through a cheesecloth filter (coffee filters work, too).

"It's so delicious and has a buttery flavor," Dee Dee says.

Because it isn't processed, the oil probably only has a shelf life of about 6 mos., even stored in a cool dark place.

For photos and details of the method they used, search for the olive oil blog on Dee Dee's website.

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