

Not-so-sweet potato from Clemson University, USDA resists pests, disease

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Scientists from Clemson University and the USDA Agricultural Research Service have developed a new variety of not-so-sweet potato, called Liberty.

Known as a boniato, or tropical sweet potato, Liberty has a dark red skin and light yellow, dry flesh with a bland flavor. Boniato potatoes originated in the tropical Americas and are grown in south Florida in the United States. They can be served fried, mashed or in soup.

"We developed Liberty because other boniato varieties are susceptible to damage by nematodes (microscopic [parasitic worms](#))," said John Mueller, plant pathologist and director of Clemson's Edisto Research and Education Center in Blackville.

Mueller worked with a team of scientists from the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory in Charleston led by entomologist Mike Jackson. Other USDA Agricultural Research Service team members included agronomist Howard Harrison, plant pathologist Judy Thies and [plant geneticist](#) Janice Bohac.

The Liberty potato is highly resistant to nematodes and moderately resistant to [insect pests](#) and fusarium wilt, a [fungal disease](#). Liberty potatoes have good baking quality, store well and do not darken after peeling as most boniato potatoes do. Home gardeners, as well as commercial producers and organic growers, can grow the Liberty potato.

Provided by Clemson University

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