Canola

In Yuma County, canola production is primarily a crop grown for seed which is used in other production regions in the US. However, there is increasing interest in producing canola here in the Yuma area as an oil crop. The University of Arizona is currently conducting trials which involve the evaluation of canola varieties for desert production.

Canola has high levels of omega-3, which helps reduce cholesterol deposition in the bloodstream.

Canola is a relatively minor crop in the county. In 2005, area producers grew roughly 250 acres of canola.

At 7% canola has the lowest saturated fat of any oil with an excellent balance of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Canola has been stated as having the best fatty acid ratio of any edible oil. This means that canola has the best mix of saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids. As a guideline, health professionals recommend that 30% of total daily calories come from fats.

Canola oil is Canada’s leading vegetable oil and Canada has the highest per capita consumption globally. Processed consumer vegetable oil products are divided into 3 categories: margarines, shortenings, and salad oils.

Margarine is composed of about 80% canola oil.

Canola is truly a "Made in Canada" product. In 1974, Dr. Baldur Stefansson, a University of Manitoba plant breeder, developed the first canola variety through traditional plant breeding methods. Canola is a genetic variation of rapeseed developed by Canadian plant breeders specifically for its nutritional qualities, particularly its low level of saturated fat.

In 1974, Dr. Baldur Stefansson, a University of Manitoba plant breeder, developed the first 'double low' variety, which reduced both erucic, and glucosinolate levels. This Brassica napus variety, Tower, was the first variety to meet the specific quality requirements used to identify a greatly improved crop known as Canola.

Each canola plant produces yellow flowers that, in turn, produce pods, similar in shape to pea pods about 1/5th the size. Within the pods are tiny round seeds that are crushed to obtain canola oil. Each seed contains approximately 40 per cent oil. The remainder of the seed is processed into canola meal, which is used as a high protein livestock feed.

Because canola is perceived as a "healthy" oil, its use is rising steadily both as a cooking oil and in processed foods. The consumption of canola oil is expected to surpass corn and cottonseed oils, becoming second only to soybean oil. It is low in saturates, high in monounsaturates, and contains a high level of oleic acid. Many people prefer the light color and mild taste of canola.
oil over olive oil, the other readily available oil high in monounsaturates.

On a global scale, Canada is a major canola producer. Fluctuations in Canadian production due to weather can have a significant impact on the world canola supply.

A plot of Canola the size of a football field could supply enough bio-diesel to run a family car for 1 year.

Many movie theatre chains have switched to making popcorn with canola oil instead of imported coconut oil. This increasing acceptance of canola oil among American consumers has led to expanded production opportunities for U.S. producers, and yet the growth in acreage has not kept up with demand.

Canola, a broadleaf plant, is a member of the mustard family, and develops a thick rosette of leaves close to the ground before beginning to send up a flowering stalk.

Canola pods form first on the lower stem, and gradually pods develop towards the top of the plant. Bottom pods are typically 12 to 18 inches from the ground. Each canola pod will have several seeds in a single row; pods are somewhat prone to splitting open (shattering) if harvest is delayed too long. Canola plants are highly branched, which helps the plant compensate for thin stands.

Canola is harvested much like winter wheat by using a platform (all-crop) grain head. Since pods are normally over a foot from the ground. Canola is ripe when plants turn a straw color and seeds become a dark brown.

Canola contains about 40 percent oil.

Canola is a high user of sulfur, almost 3 times greater sulfur is needed for the growth of a canola crop than that needed for the growth of a wheat crop. The consequences of low soil S levels are very serious in canola production.

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