

Brazil launches a lettuce that is more resistant to heat

The Brazilian authorities have announced the launch of a new species of lettuce that is more resistant to high temperatures and that has a harvest time that is one week earlier.

The announcement was made by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Agency (Embrapa), which will launch the BRS Mediterranea lettuce on April 24, whose main characteristic is its tolerance to early blooming caused by heat, so its harvest lasts, on average, one week less than the other varieties.

According to Embrapa, the new lettuce can be grown in all regions of Brazil and in any production system, i.e. in open fields, hydroponics, or protected crop systems.

The Mediterranean BRS lettuce is also resistant to the main soil diseases suffered by lettuce, such as fusariosis and meloidogyne, which reduces the need for the use of agrotoxins in the crop.

The new lettuce was developed within the Embrapa Vegetable genetic improvement program, in Brasilia, together with the Agrocinco company. "The research focused on adapting the species to the tropical conditions of our country, mainly because the high temperatures can make the plant bloom early and produce latex, a substance that causes bitterness in the leaves," said researcher and program coordinator, Fabio Suinaga.

Lettuce is the most consumed vegetable in Brazil and adapts to the more pleasant climate. The most important varieties are the crêpe, the American, the smooth, and the Roman, in order of economic importance. Lettuce is composed mainly of water (95 percent of the weight) and they are an important source of mineral salts and vitamins, such as calcium and vitamin A, according to Embrapa.

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