Experimenting with Growing Ulluco as a Niche Crop

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**Abstract**

Ulluco (*Ullucus tuberosus*) has the potential to be farmed as a niche crop in temperate climates outside of the crop's native high-elevation South American range. The brightly colored and delicious tubers have considerable consumer appeal for those who become aware of them and offer an alternative to potato growers. Challenges include photoperiod restrictions, along with sensitivity to summer heat and early fall frosts. Cultivars are only available from limited sources in the United States at this time, and evaluation for specific climatic suitability would be desirable. The sharply-sweet, crispy tubers of oca (*Oxalis tuberosa*) and the spicy elongated tubers of mashua (*Tropaelum tuberosum*) have a history of being intercropped with ulluco. All may be grown in United States maritime regions either as separate crops or together if photoperiod restrictions can be selected with future breeding programs.

**Summary**

Ulluco is a tasty, desirable crop that has a reputation for being challenging to grow outside of the Andes. As it is a highly-priced seasonal restaurant delicacy, growing ulluco may be worth investigating as a niche crop in protected maritime regions. Along with oca, mashua and yacon, these unique Andean tubers deserve attention from both agricultural researchers and experimental small-scale farmers looking for alternatives to potatoes.