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By Michael Barker

Wednesday 14th October 2020, 11:51 GMT

Demand surges for edible pumpkins

Tesco reports large volumes of Sweet Cooking pumpkins being planted in response to the vegan trend



Edible pumpkins are the latest winner in the vegan boom, according to Tesco, with more crops being planted than ever before.

Ahead of Halloween, the supermarket pointed out that until a few years ago the majority of pumpkins grown in the UK were of the carving variety. However the plant-based food revolution has changed that with demand for edible or Sweet Cooking pumpkins, as they are known, up by 150 per cent in the last two years at Tesco.

Tesco pumpkin grower Oakley Farms, in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, reported that it's planting a record number of the Sweet Cooking variety this year. The farm is one of the UK's largest suppliers of pumpkins, growing about five million each year.

Tesco pumpkin buyer David Tavernor said: "Pumpkins are no longer a novelty fruit only bought by parents for their kids as an essential Halloween decoration. Thanks to the plant-based food revolution they've become really popular with vegans, even taking pride of place as a Christmas centrepiece for the festive feast.

"The edible ones are far sweeter than the carving variety and because of the growing demand we've re-branded them this year as Sweet Cooking Pumpkins."

Steve Whitworth of Oakley Farms added: "Britain is becoming more like America in that pumpkins are not only bought to carve but also to eat and their sweet flesh is delicious in soups and pies. As a result

of this growing popularity we've planted 100,000 Sweet Cooking pumpkins this year."

Tesco's pumpkin range has gone on sale this week. The retailer is selling four different varieties – Novelty including devil (red) and ghost (white) types, Carving in standard, large and giant sizes, Sweet Cooking, and Munchkin.

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