

From convenience to sustainability, cross-breeding to fruit sorting, taste to marketing, the contenders for this year's Fruit Logistica Innovation Award (FLIA) vary greatly in the ways they help lift the industry. They hail from six countries, with Germany and the Netherlands making up for 60% of the shortlist. Visitors to the event in Berlin will be able to vote today and tomorrow (Feb. 6 and 7), before the winner is announced on Friday (Feb. 8). At www.freshfruitportal.com we provide a quick snapshot of the nominees in alphabetical order. For more detailed information click [here](#).



European apple consumption fell last year, which is all the more reason why the category needs help. One innovator with the fruit is Germany's Elbe-Obst Vertriebs GmbH with its **Apfel-Schiffchen** product, which means "Little Apple Ships". The boats are sold as dried slices to make them crisp and extend shelf life without damaging the fruit's cell structure, with the smell conserved by a special lining in the bag.

The saying goes that "you can't get blood from a turnip", and while the brassica has been used to emphasize impossible situations, it is also unlikely to be the first vegetable that comes to mind in the daily habits of average households. However, Germany's Berh AG has developed the **Black salsify and turnips ready to cook** product to promote a convenient Vitamin C-rich food that is normally less popular because of the preparation involved.

With around 8 billion people expected on this earth in 2022, the need to do more with less is paramount for horticulture. Dutch business Staay Food Group has developed its **City-Farming** solution, enabling production all year regardless of local climate and soil conditions. LED lighting allows seeds to be cultivated consistently, with a protected environment that rules out the need for pesticides - a "sustainable, future-oriented method of healthy food production".

The only non-European entry on the list comes from Israel, with Ben-Dor Fruits & Nurseries Ltd's **Colored Apricots**. Some of the key benefits of these stonefruit are their different skins and flesh compared to traditional apricots. Varieties - developed through conventional breeding - include the Blackcot with yellow flesh and hairy black skin, the Vaiiolet with purple skin and red flesh, and the Tiger with crimson skin and juicy red striped flesh.

Tozer Seeds Ltd from the U.K. will be exhibiting its **Flower Sprout** product which is a hybrid of Brussels sprouts and kale. They look like tiny cabbages with a similar size to Brussels sprouts, edged with frilly green leaves that show flashes of purple. Key advantages of the flower sprout are its lower susceptibility to disease and the fact it holds double the amount of Vitamin E and B6 as its parent sprout, while it is easy to prepare too.

The third German entry is a marketing campaign called **Frische ist Leben**, which means "Freshness is life". Spearheaded by 5 am Tag e.V. with support from the European Union, this three-year campaign that started in May 2012 promotes fruit and veggie sales in Germany. The pitch began with large posters on 5,000 billboards in 900 cities and towns. Campaign organizers say it generated 130 million consumer contacts in the first six weeks.

Postharvest packing efficiency is often cited as a key challenge for fruit growers to get their products to markets in good nick. Companies like Abracad Technoworks, BV from the Netherlands help market this possible. Its **High speed counting and packing service** is a feeding system for filling cartons with small bags. The system's counting conveyor uses two ultrasonic cells and works with an accuracy of +/-1 for each carton.

Diversity enriches the palate but the average consumer will often stick to what they know. However, Netherlands-based Banken Champignons BV's **Mushroom to combine** product finds a way to introduce buyers to new mushroom varieties in a mix with the familiar. For fungal connoisseurs the product helps for preparing different dishes, in four types - for pasta, for soup, for meat and for the wok.

France's Sofruileg is also in the running for the award with its **Nergi** fruit, which are kiwiberries that were developed in conjunction with New Zealand's Plant & Food Research. The oblong grape-sized fruit has a kiwifruit-like texture but the skin can be eaten, making it ideal for a quick snack, a healthy addition to deserts, salads or smoothies. The fruit is high in fiber and Vitamin C.

The second contender on the sustainability front is Belgian company GreenWatt SA's On-site biogas plant, which is compact in size compared to regular plants and can harness organic waste and waste water, turning them into renewable energy. The self-regulating system only requires one hour of maintenance per day from low-skilled staff, and can also provide organic fertilizer, as well as electricity and heat that can be sold to the electricity grid.

Photo: Fotolia, Mopic

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