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Mother Earth sees uptick on exotic mushrooms

By

Keith Loria

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With 53 growing houses located in southern Chester County in West Grove, Oxford, and Landenberg, PA, [Mother Earth LLC](#) has built a stellar reputation in the organic mushroom industry.

Despite some challenges that have popped up in the world this past year, the company has had a good year all things considered.

“Coming out of COVID-19, we’ve been able to meet demands and increase distribution,” said Mark Kreiner, outside sales coordinator for the company.

Recently, Mother Earth launched a retail Lion’s Mane organic SKU, which is one of the hottest mushrooms out there today.

“It’s loaded with nutrients and health benefits, and if you go into any vitamin shop, you’ll see various SKUs of powdered Lion’s Mane,” Kreiner said. “We felt, what a better way to get those key attributes to the consumer in its natural form.”

At the SEPC Southern Innovations Show in Nashville, TN, in September, Mother Earth unveiled another new SKU, an Organic Mother’s Harvest item, which Kreiner described as “an exciting mix of organic exotic mushrooms that will vary in components depending upon supply availability, with Pioppino and King Oyster being the everyday core components. We’re really excited about getting that launched for Q4 this year.”

With September being National Mushroom Month, Mother Earth has done a great deal to promote mushrooms, including creating some great mushroom displays built by Brian Dey of Four Seasons Produce for the month-long event.

“A lot of distributor partners and merchandisers have gone out and set some really nice displays to support the month,” Kreiner said. “We are anticipating strong demand as we get into the peak consumption period for mushrooms, which are October through January.”

As part of its strategy for 2023, Mother Earth is getting ready to ramp up its beds and production to ensure it can meet, and hopefully exceed, the seasonal demand.

Kreiner has seen a fair number of retailers gravitating toward making the fresh mushroom set exclusively organic, with Fresh Thyme, MOM’s, Sprouts, Whole Foods and others leading the pack.

“The legacy of Mother Earth has been organic mushrooms, and we offered our conventional a little more than a year ago to become a full-line supplier, but we’ve seen a huge uptick in organics,” he said. “It started prior to COVID-19, but that really got consumers interested in what they were eating

from a health and wellness standpoint. A lot of those consumers wanted less processed food and wanted a more clean, natural product. So, it hit that hotspot.”

He’s also seen more print ads and retailers putting organic mushrooms in secondary locations in an effort to sell more, as stores are realizing they need to keep the product on the shelves to meet the demand.

“I’ve seen more exotic mushrooms coming to the shelf this year also,” Kreiner said. “In past years, organic has really been focused on white and Cremini and Portobellos, but now you’re seeing organic opening up to Maitakes, Shiitakes, Beach and Trumpet mushrooms. Retailers have responded by adding more space for those items.”

Brown mushrooms are also growing in popularity, steadily increasing every year, which Kreiner attributes to their taste and holding up better on the shelves.

September is historically a tight month for mushroom crops, and that’s been the case in 2022.

“We are transitioning into the fall, and from what we’re planning, the beds should be good to go for the holiday demand,” Kreiner said. “A lot of the business is becoming contractual, so as retailers submit their RFPs and review their categories, we may see some more opportunities for growth there. We’re seeing, as an organic grower, companies calling us, so I think our heritage has been a draw for distributors to reach out to us.”

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About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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