

Food that Tastes Fantastic and *is* Good for You + the Planet

An interview with Yves Potvin, founder of Garden Protein International, the maker of a new branded line of plant-based foods called gardein™

Q: What is gardein™?

gardein™ is a line of healthy and delicious plant-based foods slow cooked to have the authentic taste and texture of premium lean meat. Made from a savory blend of vegetables, grains and plant-based proteins including pea, wheat and soy, gardein™ is free of cholesterol and trans fats and the majority of products provide a good source of fiber and are low in fat.

Q: What does gardein™ mean?

gardein™ is the combination of the words “garden and protein.” It reinforces that good things come from the ground. We often say goodness grows!

Q: Is gardein™ good for you?

Yes – in fact, it’s great way for the whole family to make healthier choices and eat better without sacrificing taste. gardein™’s nutritional profile is very comparable , if not better, than animal-based protein. For example, gardein™ has no cholesterol and no trans fats. In fact, Bob Greene’s “Best Life Seal of Approval” has been awarded to many of our meat-free fresh and frozen high-protein and low-fat foods because they fit so well into a healthy lifestyle.

Q: What sets gardein™ apart from other meat-free foods?

Two things: the taste and the texture. People love gardein™! It’s easy to cook with, it’s convenient and it’s good for you. In the past, people were disappointed with meat-free alternatives, the taste didn’t stack up and the texture was not anywhere close to meat. With gardein™, people don’t feel like they are giving anything up to make this positive move for themselves, their family and the planet. We are also very fortunate to have our foods recently featured on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” – both shows bring a lot of positive awareness to eating better (and helping to take care of the planet) and including plant-based foods like ours into your diet. Additionally, hundreds of consumers have blogged about how much they love gardein™.

Q: Why did you create gardein™?

To me, the meat-alternatives category was stuck “between the bun” – hotdogs and hamburgers. gardein™ is “beyond the bun” meaning meat-free foods perfect for the centre of the plate. Today, restaurants, universities and corporate campuses have added gardein™ to the menu as the demand for environmentally sustainable and vegetarian menu items has grown tremendously over the last few years.

Q: Why would someone eat gardein™?

gardein™ appeals to individuals for different reasons: health, environmental or compassion towards animals. Today, concern for the environment not only ranks high in the minds of Americans it is driving them to make more conscious choices when it comes to the food they eat. People who are looking to reduce their intake of animal protein are fans of our foods, as well as vegans and vegetarians, as gardein™ satisfies the craving or ‘memory of meat’ for many of them. gardein™ is a great alternative to dishes that traditionally call for chicken or beef.

Q: Where can people buy gardein™?

Today, gardein™ is sold in the produce cooler and freezer section of 9,500 natural food and grocery stores across the US and Canada. We also have a Food Service division that serves the needs of this very important market. gardein™ is on the menu at universities and colleges across North America as well as at hundreds of restaurants and corporate campuses for some of the largest organizations in America. In fact, we’re currently testing gardein™ in a few Chipotle locations in New York City, Washington D.C. and Denver as a “Garden Blend” vegan burrito. The feedback to date has been great and more test locations are being added.

Q: What’s the future look like?

We are committed to helping people live healthier lives. And continue to expand our line of meat-free foods. We also believe plant-based foods are part of the solution to feeding our growing global population. One day we hope to see gardein™ on every menu: just imagine ordering a Caesar salad with gardein™ instead of chicken.

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