

# All About ZESPRI™

## **The History of ZESPRI™ Kiwifruit**

The kiwifruit belongs to the berry family of fruits and is descended from a wild Chinese vine. Missionary Isabel Fraser first introduced the Hayward variety of kiwifruit, now known as GREEN kiwifruit, to New Zealand when she returned from China with seeds of “yang tao” in 1904. The New Zealand plants bore their first fruit in 1910 and were given the name Chinese Gooseberry by locals. Twenty-four years later, the first vines were planted in the Bay of Plenty, a sunshine-rich area with sufficient rainfall and fertile volcanic soil. ZESPRI™ Kiwifruit are still grown there today.

Exports to Europe began in the early 1950s and the Chinese Gooseberry had a brief name change to “melonette” in 1959. But the name was quickly changed again when exporters learned of the import tariffs that applied to melons. The newly named kiwifruit – named after New Zealand's national bird, the kiwi – arrived in San Francisco in 1959. Since then, the kiwifruit industry has grown to a \$600 million business, with 2,500+ growers selling their fruit through ZESPRI™ International to more than 70 countries.



## **ZESPRI™ GOLD Kiwifruit Flourishes**

Horticulturalists from New Zealand's Bay of Plenty imported Chinese gold kiwifruit seeds in 1987 and began an eleven-year process of developing ZESPRI™ GOLD Kiwifruit. Just like GREEN kiwifruit, several types of gold kiwifruit grow wild in China. But, the wild gold variety tends to be small and is not commercially viable. Through natural cross-pollination with select gold kiwi vines and grafting with vigorous green kiwi vines, horticulturalists were able to develop the complex flavor of ZESPRI™ GOLD Kiwifruit. They also were able to increase the shelf life with each subsequent generation. The naturally occurring GOLD variety hit the stores in North America in 2000.

## **What's With the Name?**

No, ZESPRI™ is not an acronym. It is a computer-generated word developed in 1996 to brand all kiwifruit grown in New Zealand. Researchers found that kiwifruit was described as “vibrant, vigorous, healthy, nutritious, effervescent, zesty, full of life, full of fun and full of energy.” So, they plugged all of the attributes into a computer program, and it prompted the word “ZESPRI.”

## **Growing Conditions to Nourish the Earth**

New Zealand is known internationally for its clean and green environment. Environmentally-considerate growing practices are very important to ZESPRI™ Kiwifruit growers. So important, they created their own system that is responsible for our kiwifruit's consistent size, appearance and taste. The ZESPRI™ System is a unique orchard-to-retail delivery process that uses environmentally-considerate methods to grow, cultivate, store and ship their fruit. More information about the green practices of ZESPRI™ Kiwifruit is available on the **Environment & Sustainability** sheet.