

Georgia-made



Innovative oils

Making a big splash with artisan oils, Clay Oliver grows the nuts and seeds for his oils on the family farm, **Oliver Farm**, located near Pitts in Wilcox County, in Central South Georgia. He represents the fifth generation to farm this land and make it productive, and he began to research oil seeds as a way to possibly make fuel. The idea, however, was too expensive to bring into fruition, but it did “fuel” another plan, namely to make food-grade oils from nuts and seeds.

Oliver first planted sunflower seeds for oil in 2012, and now he's added peanuts and pecans to his oils. After tasting all three of the oils at a mini-trade expo in Tifton, it was clear that these were gourmet-quality products that would indeed “make a splash.” Now they're showing up at farmers markets, where they're being co-marketed with other agricultural products. And this year, Oliver put in an appearance at the Decatur Book Festival's Culinary Village. So the “splash” is spreading.

The endeavor, he says on his website, has been challenging but deeply rewarding, and he promises more seed oils in the future. Meanwhile, pumpkin, toasted benne, almond and walnut are currently available by request.

Prices: \$5-\$15 per 5-ounce bottle, or \$15-\$25 for a 16-ounce bottle.

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Old World crop in the New World

In 1756, King George II gave a large land grant to French colonists who planted indigo, mulberries and olives, and later rice and cotton. Among the land's owners over time was the late Mills B. Lane Sr., who founded

The seeds and nuts that grow on Clay Oliver's farm in South Georgia's Wilcox County yield his high-quality oils.

C&S Bank. Lane continued the tradition of experimental plantings.

Today, Lebanon Plantation, as the property is known, grows ginger. USDA Certified Organic ginger.

How did all this happen?

An Australian by birth—from near Brisbane on the country's east coast north of Sydney—Ross Harding began visiting Savannah when his daughter was studying at Savannah College of Art & Design. There he met Howard Morrison, who lives at Lebanon Plantation and is a grandson of Lane's.

Harding noticed similarities between the soils and climate of Brisbane, where ginger is grown, and Savannah. Harding and Morrison began planting ginger, as well as galangal and turmeric, in March 2012.

The result is **Verdant Kitchen**, a splendid line of ginger-based products, ranging from ginger ale to the most addictive ginger snaps ever, plus, of course, ground ginger, raw ginger and even ginger syrup and honey. There's a ginger tea too, which also has turmeric in it. Ginger-flavored pecans and crystallized ginger is fabulous with hot tea and a platter of fresh fruit as a dessert.

Verdant Kitchen's ginger products are sold at farmers markets and are available online. Price: Ginger snaps, \$5 per 3-ounce bag, about a half-dozen cookies.

2750 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., Ste. E, Duluth; (912) 349-2958; verdantkitchen.com.

These products show what the South, and Georgia, are all about and how our values align. We like to look good, feel good, live in pretty environments and, of course, eat well. And Georgians are making things that meet all those goals. We salute these entrepreneurs and their products, and wish them significant profitability. 🍪

Jane F. Garvey is a Decatur-based freelance writer; among other topics, she writes about quality Georgia-produced goods from around the state



Ginger-based products, grown and made by Verdant Kitchen, not only taste wonderful, but ginger can control nausea and supplies vitamins.



More Georgia products online!

For more hot Georgia products and a bonus recipe, see page 34A of the November 2014 digital edition, online at www.georgiamagazine.org.