

Exploring Market Potential of Baby Ginger as a Niche Crop in Temperate Climates

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Introduction

Baby ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is a unique product that has excellent potential as a niche crop with a retail market value of \$16 per pound. While ginger is typically grown in tropical climates, baby ginger can be produced in temperate regions using season extension methods. Conducted in 2021 at the Rutgers University Specialty Crop Research and Extension Center, this project explored the potential for baby ginger (var. Peruvian Yellow) production and marketing in Central New Jersey.

Objectives

1. Evaluate yield potential and determine best management practices for baby ginger grown in temperate climates.
2. Evaluate market potential of baby ginger grown in temperate regions via feedback from local businesses

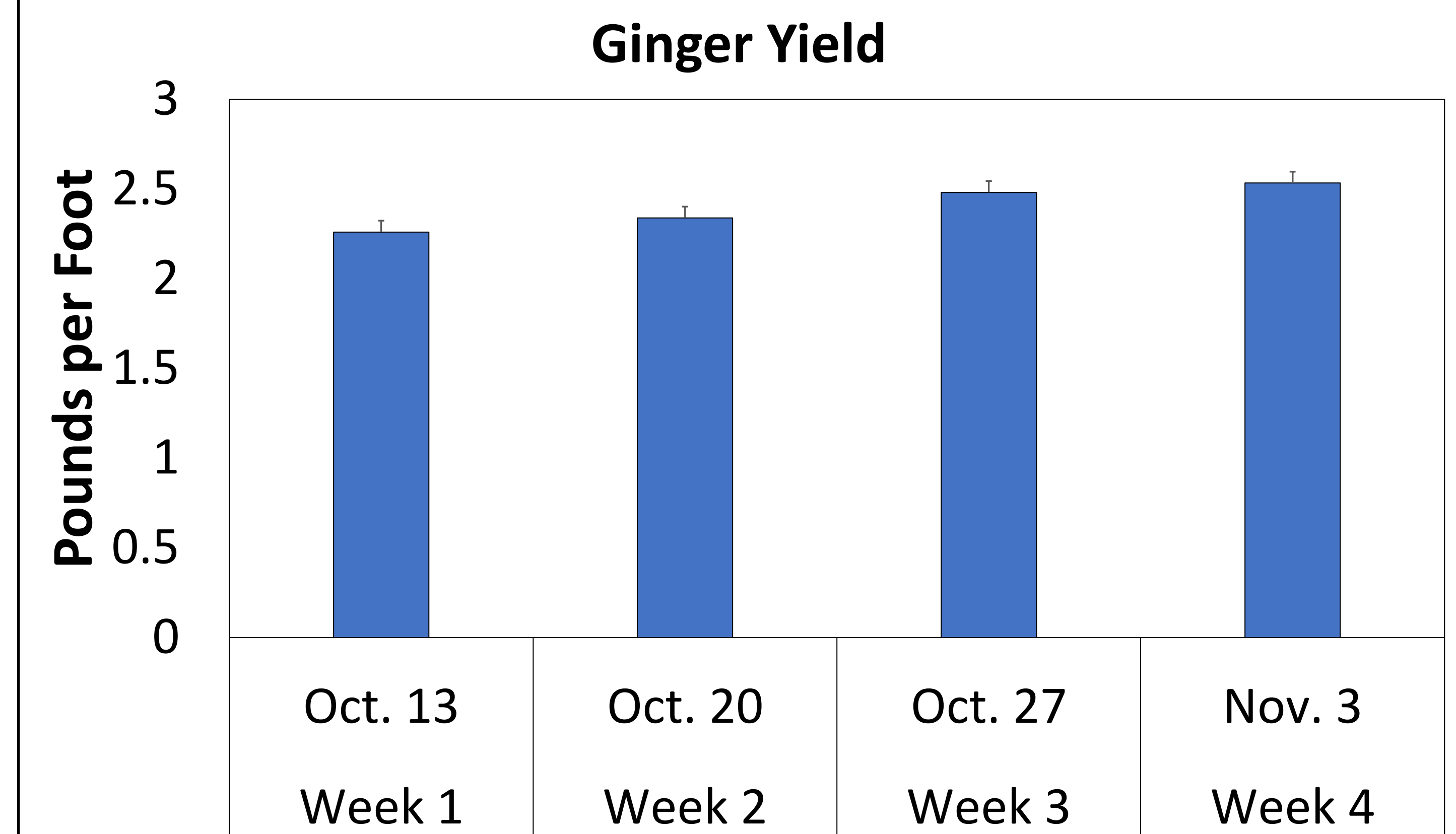
Materials and Methods

- Thirty pounds of baby ginger was pre-spouted in a heated greenhouse for 8 weeks starting in late February 2021.
- The ginger was transplanted into two 12' x 24' caterpillar tunnels in May 2021 and was spaced at 6" apart in eight 20' long rows that were spaced on 2' centers.
- Yields were measured for ginger harvested from 5-foot sections of each row over a four-week harvest period starting in mid-October.
- Samples of the harvested ginger were provided to 18 different local businesses (including food and drink establishments) who indicated their level of satisfaction with the crop and likelihood to purchase from local farmers.



Results

Ginger yields averaged 2.25 lbs. per foot over a 4-week fall harvest period. A total yield of 438 lbs. of ginger was harvested. With a retail price of \$16 per pound, this crop of ginger was valued at \$7,000. Local businesses provided positive feedback about the ginger via evaluation surveys.



Survey Responses (n=11) from restaurants, cafes, breweries, and distilleries ranging from 0 to 100 seats:

- **82%** had never used baby ginger before
- **91%** said they were likely to purchase baby ginger from local farmers in the future
- **100%** were satisfied with the crop overall

"The baby ginger was beautiful and tropical looking."

"The ginger had excellent flavor."

"Very easy to peel and much more flavorful than any other ginger I've tried."



Conclusion

High yields combined with a high satisfaction from local businesses and their likelihood to purchase baby ginger from growers indicate strong market potential for baby ginger as a niche crop in temperate climates.

