

The NuMex Jalmundo, which are large jalapeño peppers, were developed at the Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University.

Mega-jalapeño ready for world

■ *NMSU's NuMex Jalmundo perfect for cheese-stuffed poppers*

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A small jalapeño can pack quite a heat wallop, so it seems a large one would deliver more of the same.

Well, no ... at least not until the Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University got busy and bred what they call the NuMex Jalmundo. The name is a contraction of "jalapeño" and the Spanish word for "world" — mundo — implying it's as big as the world.

These oversized peppers were developed with the idea that they would be great for making "poppers," jalapeños stuffed usually with cheese, then breaded or coated, and deep-fried or grilled, says Danise Coon,



COURTESY CHILE PEPPER INSTITUTE
NMSU

Mega-jalapeño ready for moment in sun

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program coordinator and research specialist at the Chile Pepper Institute.

Other strains of large or jumbo jalapeños on the market or being developed at agricultural research institutions were "too mild," she explains.

"They didn't have enough heat, which is what people who eat jalapeños want. The restaurant industry also wants them with heat, and they want them big enough to stuff, particularly for poppers."

The Chile Pepper Institute began developing the NuMex Jalmundo about six years ago, hybridizing it from a bell pepper and jalapeño. It was officially released in early

2010. But it received a lot of attention after a story was published in Popular Science magazine in January and just before the Super Bowl in February, Coon says. Not surprisingly, poppers are a popular appetizer at sports bars and among people hosting Super Bowl parties.

"It will take a year or more to see if it (NuMex Jalmundo) catches on, but at this point there's a lot of interest."

By fall, NMSU, which maintains a list of crops and growers, should know which growers in New Mexico are producing this jalapeño for the commercial market, Coon says. NMSU also will likely hear via word-of-mouth if and when NuMex Jalmundos start appearing at farmers' markets, she

adds.

If you want to grow NuMex Jalmundo, seed packets are available from NMSU. Packets of about 30 seeds cost \$4, and there is a \$14 minimum order requirement, which includes shipping and handling charges. Seeds can be ordered online at chilepepperinstitute.org (click on "shop"). Seeds can also be ordered by calling 575-646-3028.

DANISE'S JALMUNDO JALAPEÑO POPPERS

Coon doesn't just do research on jalapeños, she eats them, too.

Makes 12 poppers.

1 dozen NuMex Jalmundo

Jalapeño peppers

1 8-ounce package chive & onion cream cheese

6 slices of hickory bacon, cut in half lengthwise

1 dozen toothpicks

Wearing food preparation gloves, de-stem and core jalapeños. Fill each pod with cream cheese. Wrap each pod with bacon, covering the opening so the cream cheese doesn't melt out. Secure the bacon with a toothpick. Place the pods on a barbecue grill and cook for 5-20 minutes depending on the bacon's thickness and grill temperature.

Let the poppers cool for 5-7 minutes before popping them in your mouth because the cream cheese will remain hot.