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### Mass producing locally grown tomatoes

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Mass producing locally grown tomatoes

Reliable Organics

AUSTIN, Texas (KXAN) -- Lots of people these days are buying organic fruits and vegetables, but the new buzz word when it comes to produce is "locally grown."

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That is not easy to do during the winter months in Central Texas, until now.

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Just off FM 535 in Cedar Creek, you will drive by what looks like a giant greenhouse.

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Inside you will find the testing location for the first year-round, mass-produced, locally grown organic tomato field.

[Mass producing locally grown tomatoes](#)

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"There's probably a bigger demand to get local than there is organic," said Steven Crider, CEO and founder of Reliable Organics.

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Steven Crider is the mind behind Reliable Organics.

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As the owner of a greenhouse production company, he was looking for an idea on how to sell more. That is when he thought of creating an organic tomato field inside a greenhouse.

"We'd also now like to be able to go to other markets of the U.S., put farms outside of metropolitan areas in order to whatever market we sell to be locally grown and organic," said Crider.

You might be wondering, how is this marketable?

In most parts of the country, local tomatoes are not grown between October and April.

During that time, small local farms cannot grow a large enough quantity of tomatoes in greenhouses to supply grocery stores, so those stores look to other countries.

"They are picked green to be shipped, artificially gassed to be ripened, and the beauty about being local is we ripen the tomato to perfection on the vine, and a day later it's at your restaurant or store," said Jack Donovan a horticulturist.

Donovan is in charge of figuring out how to make this tomato farm possible.

"There are just a ton of perimeters- temperature, humidity, day length, fertilizer," said Donovan, "Then it's a question of how do we get that tomatoes to yield at the levels we want it to."

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After three years, that is one of the final problems to work out- getting a plant to produce a pound of tomatoes each week for 40 weeks.

"We're very close to being able to solve that on a consistent basis," said Donovan.

Then, Reliable Organics will be the first to produce locally grown organic tomatoes year-round, and it was started right here in Central Texas.



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