Komodo Dragon Chilli Pepper to Be Unleashed Across Britain

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Hot chilli pepper lovers – take a deep breath, grab some milk and prepare for meltdown – the Komodo Dragon has arrived.

That's the name of Britain's hottest ever commercially grown chilli pepper sold on a supermarket shelf which is set to send heat levels rocketing in kitchens across the UK from this week.

Grown in Bedfordshire, the Komodo Dragon measures up to an excruciating 1.4 million Scoville units.*

To give some idea of that potency, the lively jalapeno pepper which is used in many pizza toppings measures a paltry 3,500 Scovilles while the very hot Scotch Bonnet is rated as up to 350,000 Scovilles.

And tomorrow, Wednesday August 12 – shoppers will be able to sample the Komodo Dragon's incredible potency themselves when it goes on sale exclusively at 500 Tesco stores.

Tesco chilli pepper buyer Eleanor Mansell said: *"In recent years we've had the fearsome Dorset Naga, the searing Bhut Jolokia and the mouth-numbing Trinidad Scorpion.*

"But they all pale in comparison to the UK's latest commercially grown chilli pepper – the mighty Komodo Dragon which puts the others in the shade.

"The Komodo Dragon is also unusual because it has a delayed reaction that lulls you into a sense of false security.

"At first you can taste a wonderful hot fruitiness but then after about 10 seconds the full might of this little demon hits you and your whole mouth is aglow.

"This is definitely a chilli pepper for connoisseurs and for those who are experienced in eating really, superhot food."

The Komodo Dragon was grown by the UK's largest producer of chillis, Salvatore Genovese whose seven acre farm is based in Blunham, Bedfordshire.

Salvatore only started growing chilli peppers 15 years ago after he took over his parents' cucumber business.

Since then chilli peppers have become so popular that Salvatore now grows about one million, or 15 tonnes, each week just to satisfy UK demand.

Salvatore said: *"Chilli peppers have really grown in popularity over the last 10 years and feature strongly in a lot of the UK's favourite dishes – from curries, Thai and Chinese food, Mexican cuisine as well as pizzas.*

"But it's the really hot ones that gain the most interest and so each year I try and grow one hotter than the last. I have chilli heads, as they're known, contacting me from all over the world asking for samples.

"The Komodo Dragon should be livening up meal times over the coming months. I'd seriously advise anyone not experienced in eating really hot chilli peppers to have some milk or yoghurt ready as a standby to douse the flames!"

Tesco, which has the widest range of chilli peppers sold in British supermarkets, has varieties for beginners such as red, green, serenade and fresno; those for seasoned users such as finger, birds eye and of course those for hardcore fans such as Scotch Bonnet.

Komodo Dragon chilli peppers, which will be available until November, will be sold in 15g packets and will cost £1 per packet.

Stores stocking the chilli pepper can be seen here.

ENDS

Note to editors:

The level of heat in a chilli pepper is measured in Scoville units.

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