



Nothing plain about Vanilla

BY JUDY ROYAL



GO NUTS FOR PECANS

Get a big dose of your favorite flavor with the vanilla cream pecans topped with vanilla bean sea salt at Sugar Island, 206 N. Topsail Drive in Surf City. Pecans are stored for two days with a vanilla bean and then slow-roasted in sour cream, vanilla extract, sugar and vanilla bean paste. When cool, they are tossed with vanilla bean sea salt. A 6-ounce bag costs \$6.

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We all know vanilla consistently wins the distinction of the country's favorite ice cream flavor, but there's a lot more to the story than just frozen treats.

Vanilla is a plant. The bean, or fruit, is commonly a source of flavoring, but it is also used to make medicine. People take vanilla to treat intestinal gas and fever, according to www.WebMD.com.

The website www.vanilla.com offers these vanilla facts:

Vanilla is the only edible fruit of the orchid family, which is the largest family of flowering plants in the world with more than 35,000 species worldwide.

Madagascar is the largest producer of vanilla worldwide, followed by Indonesia. Vanilla thrives between 10 and 20 degrees either side of the Equator.

Vanilla has more than 250 organic components that comprise its distinctive flavor and fragrance.