

This Spring, Orange is the New Green

Contributed by ARAcontent
Saturday, 21 March 2009

Page, Arizona - Spring has arrived. Cherry blossoms are blooming, robin redbreasts are chirping and the roads have lost the slushy mess now that winter has melted away.

It's time to take a drive, which means paying attention to what you're driving on -- which, in the near future, could be tires made from orange oil. This new eco-friendly product is about to hit the marketplace and could change the way Americans view one of the most underappreciated, yet technologically-advanced parts of a car..

"An orange oil tire," explains Mark Chung of Yokohama Tire Corporation, "mixes rubber with orange oil and helps the environment because they are 80 percent petroleum free."

Chung says the orange oil used in Yokohama's dB Super E-spec, the world's first orange oil passenger tire, comes from a juicing plant in Japan. "The tires use more natural rubber (a renewable resource) and are lighter, which conserves gasoline by reducing rolling resistance up to 20 percent. Low rolling resistance tires improve fuel efficiency by minimizing the energy wasted (as heat) as the tire rolls down the road."

In non-tech terms, this means fewer trips to gas pump (money-saver) and less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (Earth-saver).

The thought of orange oil tires conjures up some fun, interesting notions, but Chung says, "the tires really aren't orange colored and don't smell like fruit. However, by using citrus instead of petroleum, it's one way Yokohama can utilize technology to make better tires for consumers and the environment."

The tires have been so successful, racers will be burning orange, er, rubber on the race track this season in the 2009 Patr3n GT3 Challenge by Yokohama. It's the first race series in the world where every car on the track -- in this case, Porsche 911 GT3 Cup cars -- will be on environmentally-friendly orange oil tires.

Chung was quick to say that orange oil tires are just a part of the solution to help the environment. "When it comes to tires, there are many ways consumers can be more eco-friendly...and save some money on gas, too. The real key is keeping your tires properly inflated."

Chung offers these tire tips:

* Once a month, when the tires are cold -- at least 3 to 4 hours after the vehicle has been driven -- check tire pressure with a reliable tire gauge. Be sure that the valve stems have a plastic or metal cap to keep dirt out and seal against leakage.

* Tires should be rotated at least every 6,000 to 8,000 miles and the alignment should be checked once a year. Misaligned tires can cause the car to scrub, which lowers mileage and causes unnecessary tire wear.

* An overinflated tire changes and increases wear on the center of the tread. A tire is designed to run with the vehicle's weight spread correctly in the road contact zone.

For additional tire care and safety tips, consumers can go to www.yokohamatire.com, the Rubber Manufacturers Association at www.rma.org and AAA Club at www.aaa.com.

Courtesy of ARAcontent