

2019 Home Demonstration Garden

RFR-A1929

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Introduction

There were three themes for the 2019 Home Demonstration Gardens—tomato types, augmented supersweet sweet corn, and cut flowers. Edible crops comprised three-quarters of the garden. Much of the produce was donated to local food pantries. The other quarter of the garden was planted with annual flowers for the purpose of cut flowers.

Materials and Methods

Seeds of vegetable and annual flowers were sown in late February and March 2019 at the Iowa State University Department of Horticulture greenhouses in Ames, Iowa. Seedlings were transplanted into cell packs a month later. In early to mid-May, plants were distributed to the farms. Each farm acclimated transplants for at least one week prior to planting. Multiple species (beans, cucumbers, summer squash, etc.) were directly seeded into the gardens. Planting dates were delayed and varied from mid-May to early June due to cool, wet weather across the state in May.

The ISU Research and Demonstration Farms in Iowa participating in the 2019 Home Demonstration Garden trial and display included Armstrong (Lewis), Horticulture Research Station (Ames), the Lyon County Fairgrounds-Northwest (Rock Rapids), Muscatine Island (Fruitland), Northern (Kanawha), Northeast (Nashua), and Monona County Fairgrounds-Western (Onawa). Plants were watered as needed throughout the growing season. Fertilizer and pesticides were applied based on growing conditions at each garden.

Tomato types. Ten tomato cultivars were grown to showcase the various sizes and shapes of fruit. Sizes and shapes included (cultivars in parentheses): large, globe-shaped red tomatoes (Roadster and Red Mountain); red and orange Roma-type tomatoes (Pony Express and Sunrise Sauce); red, cocktail-type tomatoes (Red Racer and Glacier); red grape tomatoes (Ruby Crush and Red Candy); and red and gold cherry tomatoes (Baby Cakes and Gold Nugget).

Augmented supersweet corn. Five cultivars of the new type of sweet corn, augmented supersweet, were grown at each farm. Cultivars included Anthem XR, Rosie, American Dream, Kickoff XR, and Awesome.

Cut flowers: Ten species and twenty-eight cultivars of annual flowers were grown as cut flowers at each farm. Overall performance of various cultivars is presented in Table 1.

Results and Discussion

Due to the late planting at several research farms, tomatoes and sweet corn were not harvested until after the Home Demonstration Garden Field Days in late July or early August. Most tomatoes and sweet corn were productive, but did not mature/ripen until mid-to-late-August.

Most of the cut flower species performed well at all Home Demonstration Gardens. Only a few species that thrive in drier soils or cooler weather showed evidence of decline at field days (Table 1).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the farm staff and Master Gardeners for planting, harvesting, and maintaining plants at each garden.

Table 1. Performance of cut flower cultivars grown at seven ISU Research and Demonstration Farms across Iowa in 2019. Plant overall performance was rated as poor, fair, good, and excellent based on observations from all field days.

Species	Cultivar	Performance	Comments
Ageratum	Timeless	Excellent	
Celosia	Asian Garden	Excellent	Many branches
	Chief Fire	Good-excellent	
	Cramer's Rose	Good	
	Eternity	Good-excellent	
	Sylphid	Good	
Gomphrena	Fireworks	Excellent	
	Ping Pong Mix	Good	Shorter stems, good bloom
	Strawberry Fields	Excellent	
Milkweed	QIS Mix	Good	Shorter stems, good bloom
	Oscar	Good	Late blooming/fruiting
Salvia	Summer Jewel Lavender	Good	
	Summer Jewel Red	Good	
Snapdragon	Big Blue	Good-excellent	Large stems
	Chantilly	Fair-good	Better in cooler weather
	Costa Mix	Fair-good	Better in cooler weather
	Madame Butterfly	Fair-good	Better in cooler weather
	Rocket Mix	Fair-good	Better in cooler weather
Statice	QIS Dark Blue	Good	Late blooming
	QIS Pale Blue	Good	Late blooming
Sunflower	Starburst Lemon Aura	Good	Many branches
	Gold Rush	Good	Many branches
Verbena	Finesse	Excellent	
Zinnia	Inca	Good	
	Queeny Lime Orange	Good-excellent	
	Zinderella Orange	Good	
	Zinderella Red	Good	