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2009 Home Demonstration Gardens

Cynthia L. Haynes

Iowa State University, chaynes@iastate.edu

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2009 Home Demonstration Gardens

Abstract

Vegetable gardening is increasingly popular in today's economy, especially since there is the potential to save money by growing food at home. One of the themes for the 2009 Home Demonstration Garden was vegetables that have the potential to reduce grocery bills. Certain vegetables such as potatoes, winter squash, onions, tomatoes, beans, and beets can be stored or processed, allowing them to be kept long after harvest. Other themes featured in the 2009 Home Demonstration Garden were white pumpkins, annual grasses, and new or unusual flowers.

Keywords

RFR A9039, Horticulture

Disciplines

Agricultural Science | Agriculture | Horticulture

2009 Home Demonstration Gardens

RFR-A9039

Cynthia Haynes, associate professor
Department of Horticulture

Introduction

Vegetable gardening is increasingly popular in today's economy, especially since there is the potential to save money by growing food at home. One of the themes for the 2009 Home Demonstration Garden was vegetables that have the potential to reduce grocery bills. Certain vegetables such as potatoes, winter squash, onions, tomatoes, beans, and beets can be stored or processed, allowing them to be kept long after harvest. Other themes featured in the 2009 Home Demonstration Garden were white pumpkins, annual grasses, and new or unusual flowers.

Materials and Methods

Plants were started from seed and grown in the horticulture greenhouses, Ames, IA in March for planting outdoors in mid to late May. Seedlings were acclimated for one week before planting outdoors. Bush beans were seeded directly in the garden in mid to late May. Plants were watered at planting and as needed during the growing season. At a few of the gardens the plants were fertilized lightly, usually at the time of planting. Fungicides were applied to prevent powdery mildew on pumpkins and squash at a couple of the gardens. Vegetables were observed for garden performance at each Garden Field Day, most of which occurred in early August.

Results and Discussion

The relative performance of long-keeping vegetables is listed in Table 1. Plant performance was rated as poor, fair, good, or excellent. Those that received an excellent rating thrived and were highly productive in all gardens. Those that received a poor rating often did not survive or produce suitable vegetables at many garden sites. The majority of vegetables trialed for the storage garden received at least a good rating and were consistently productive at each garden. The cool, wet spring and early summer in much of Iowa encouraged blight on many tomatoes.

Many of the plants in the other themes also performed well. With the exception of Cotton Candy, all other white pumpkins (Gooligan, Lumina, Moonshine, and Valencino) performed well at each garden. Gooligan was a stand-out at each garden, producing abundant small, white, ornamental pumpkins. In contrast, almost all annual grasses performed poorly at each garden. Only Savannah Melinas, Wild Spike Cyperus, and Purple Baron Millet performed well at each garden. The cool, wet spring may have contributed to the decline of the other annual grasses. Flowers that performed exceptionally well at all gardens were Serena Angelonia, Toucan Portulaca, Rose Bon Bon and Psyche White Cosmos, and Tiger Eye Rudbeckia. All cultivars of marigold and cultivars of zinnia performed well at each garden.

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Table 1. Description and performance of garden vegetables grown at seven Iowa State University Research and Demonstration Farms in 2009.

Winter Squash		
Bon Bon	Buttercup type, early, compact plants	Excellent
Confetti	Acorn type: yellow/green rind w/orange flesh, compact plants	Good
Early Butternut	Butternut type: early, orange flesh, compact plants	Excellent
Frisco	Butternut type: 4-5 lb, orange flesh, vigorous plants	Fair
Honey Bear	Acorn type: dark green rind w/orange flesh, compact plants	Good
Sunshine	Kabocha type: early, orange rind and flesh, compact plants	Excellent
Tomatoes		
Better Boy	Indeterminate: large, bright red fruits	Good
Fresh Salsa	Determinate: plum-shaped, meaty fruits	Good
First Light	Indeterminate: red fruit but harvested with green shoulders	Good
Longkeeper	Indeterminate: orange-red fruits, noted for winter storage	Good
Mountain Glory	Determinate: large, bright red fruits	Good
Pony Express	Determinate: red, plum-shaped fruits	Good
Red October	Indeterminate: bright red fruits, noted for winter storage	Good
Sweet Seedless	Indeterminate: bright red fruits, little/no seeds	Good
Potatoes		
Kennebec	Medium-large potato: white skin and flesh, keeps well	Excellent
Red Pontiac	Medium-large potato: red skin and white flesh, keeps well	Good
Viking	Medium potato: purple/red skin and white flesh	Good
Yukon Gold	Small-medium potato: thin white skin, yellow flesh, buttery taste	Good
Onions		
Copra	Yellow, early, good for storage	Good
Zeppelin	Red, good for storage	Good
Stuttgarter	Yellow, good for storage	Good
Beets		
Blankhoma	White, oval, beet	Good
Chioggia	Magenta and white striped beet	Good
Ruby Queen	Dark red, round beet	Good
Pickling Cucumbers		
Alibi	Compact plants, dark green small cucumbers	Good
Little Tyke	Early, dark green small cucumbers, vigorous vines	Good
Pearl	Whitish-green, small cucumbers	Good
Beans		
Ambra	Bush type, early, good producer	Excellent
Blue Lake	Bush type, heavy producer and long-time favorite	Good
Pike	Bush type, early, consistent yields	Good
Strike	Bush type, consistent yields	Good