

Results: 2003 Variety Trial

2003 Vegetable and Flower Variety Trials Lettuce

Planting Overview: A WVU Extension Service sponsored lettuce variety trial was conducted in 2003 in which six West Virginia Master Gardeners conducted field trials on the following varieties: Concept, Red Sails, Green Salad Bowl, Crisp'n Green, Simpson Elite, Black Jack, and Envy. Two growers planted in double rows while the remaining participants planted single rows.

Germination and Growth: The number of seeds planted varied among participants. The best germination was reported in Red Sails at 95%, followed by Crisp'n Green at 75%. Black Jack had the lowest germination reported to be 5%. No participants thinned the seedlings. Colors ranged from dark green, to red and green to yellow-green to vary dark red.

Yields: Earliest significant yields were reported on Concept, Red Sails, and Simpson Elite at 12 days. These were followed by Green Salad Bowl, Crisp'n Green, Black Jack, and Envy at 30 days.

All growers except one indicated the varieties provided average harvest over the season and most harvested once a week until mid to late August. One participant reported that all varieties were to bitter to eat. Envy had the shortest average leaf length at 5.4 inches followed by Green Salad Bowl at 5.6 inches. All other varieties had similar average leaf length ranging from 6.1 to 6.2 inches.

Results: All varieties were evaluated for raw flavor and raw texture on a scale of 1 = very good, 2 = good, 3 = average, 4 = poor, and 5 = awful. Since one grower reported all varieties to bitter to eat, we eliminated his response from the tabulation. In raw flavor, Red Sails rated between very good and good, while Concept, Green Salad Bowl, Simpson Elite, and Black Jack rated good. Crisp'n Green and Envy rated between good and average. In texture Red Sails rated very good, Concept, Crisp'n Green, Simpson Elite, and Black Jack rated between very good and good. Green Salad Bowl and Envy rated good. Of those responding 100% said they would purchase Red Sails again. Seventy-five percent said they would purchase Concept and Simpson Elite. Black Jack received the lowest rate when only 1/3 of the participants indicated they would purchase seed again.

An overall ranking was given on a scale of 1 = best to 7 = worst. Red Sails received the best rating at 1.75 followed by both Crisp'n Green and Black Jack at 3.33. Simpson Elite, Envy, and Concept received similar ratings at 4 to 4.25 while Green Salad Bowl had the worst overall rating at 5.25.

Conclusion: In terms of participant's rankings and overall performance, Red Sails is the top lettuce variety in the trial.

Results: 2003 Variety Trial (compiled in 2004)

2003 Vegetable and Flower Variety Trials French Marigolds

Planting Overview: A WVU Extension Service sponsored French marigold variety trial was conducted in 2003 in which West Virginia Master Gardeners conducted field trials on the following varieties of marigolds: Janie, Hero-Bee, Bonanza, Tangerine Gem, and Honeycomb. The earliest seeding date was May 25 and the remainder of the seeds were planted the second and third weeks of June. A majority of the marigolds were planted in a single row.

Germination and Growth: The seed that were planted the earliest for all varieties took 18 days to germinate, whereas the other plantings took only 7 to 10 days. In one case, Tangerine Gem did not germinate. The date of first bloom ranged from July 1 for Janie to August 15 for Honeycomb. All varieties except Honeycomb bloomed consistently from July 1 until the end of Sept. All varieties by some of the growers were used as cut flowers.

Bloom color varied from bright yellow to orange to a mixture of yellow and maroon. These colors were consistent with that advertised by the seed company. No one deadheaded any of the varieties.

Yield: The average height for nine plants for Janie, Hero-Bee, Bonanza, and Honeycomb were all similar at 6.26 to 6.5 inches. Tangerine Gem had the tallest average height at 14.34 inches. However, there was only 5 plants in this sample. The average number of flower heads reported from 30 inches of row was: Janie = 68, Hero-Bee = 73, Bonanza = 69.3, Tangerine Gem = 308, and Honeycomb = 37.6. The flower head diameter of Tangerine Gem averaged 25% smaller than the other varieties at .79 inches.

Results: All varieties were evaluated for color brightness on a scale of 1 = brightest to 5 = least bright. Both Hero-Bee and Tangerine Gem had an average brightness rating of 2, followed by Bonanza at 3, Janie at 3.33, and the least brightest color was reported to be Honeycomb at 3.55.

Participants said that they would purchase all varieties again with the exception of Honeycomb which received one “no” vote. An overall rating was given on a scale of 1 = best to 5 = worst. Hero-Bee and Tangerine Gem received the highest average overall rating at 2 followed by Bonanza at 2.3, Honeycomb at 3.6, and Janie receiving the lowest overall rating at 4.

Conclusions: In terms of participant rankings and overall performance, Hero-Bee and Tangerine Gem were the top French marigold varieties in the trial. However, you should keep in mind that one participant did not report on Tangerine Gem due to germination failure.

Results: 2003 Variety Trials

2003 Vegetable and Flower Variety Trials
Sunflowers

Planting Overview: WVU Extension, with the assistance of Master Gardeners, conducted a flower trial of the following sunflower cut flower varieties: Velvet Queen, Soraya, Razzmatazz, Autumn Beauty and Ring of Fire. Four growers provided data for this trial. Planting dates were May 22 and 25, June 22 and July 9. Two growers planted in single rows and 2 growers planted in double rows.

Germination and Growth: The shortest germination reported was 5 days and the longest was 10 days for Soraya and Ring of Fire, respectively. The number of days to first bloom varied tremendously among the growers. For example, one grower reported blooms 40 days after seeding while another grower reported blooms 61 days after seeding. In general, Velvet Queen, Razzmatazz and Autumn Beauty had fewer days to the first bloom than did Soraya and Ring of Fire.

Razzmatazz appeared to have the most days with bloom in July, August and September. The next variety was Autumn Beauty followed by Velvet Queen and Ring of Fire. Soraya was the poorest bloomer with only 35 days of bloom in the 3-month period.

Growers reported that the blooms were not all the same color within variety. Colors ranged from deep red to yellow; some varieties had bicolor pedals of yellow/orange. All of the growers used at least some of the varieties for cut flowers. Soraya received the highest ratings in terms of color brightness. Ring of Fire was the poorest in terms of color brightness.

Plant Growth Factors: Only one grower reported pest problems, that being with Japanese beetles on all varieties.

Harvest Yields: Autumn Beauty averaged 81 flowers per 30 inches of row; Velvet Queen followed with 68 flowers; Razzmatazz had 57; Ring of Fire had 30 and Soraya produced 20 blooms per 30 inches of row. Autumn Beauty held its flowers the highest off the ground (65 inches). The shortest plants were Ring of Fire. Velvet Queen produced the largest flower heads at 5.6 inches. The flower stalks from all varieties were adequately long for a range of cut flower uses. The average stalk lengths were 11.5 inches for Ring of Fire up to 27.6 inches for Soraya.

Results: An overall ranking was given to each variety by each grower on the basis of 1 = best, 6 = least. Overall, Velvet Queen was the top-ranked variety followed by Razzmatazz, Autumn Beauty, Ring of Fire and Soraya. In terms of rankings by participants and performance, Velvet Queen, Autumn Beauty and Razzmatazz were the top three varieties in the trial.

Results: 2003 Variety Trials

**2003 Vegetable and Flower Variety Trials
Cucumbers**

Planting Overview: WVU Extension, with the assistance of Master Gardeners, conducted a vegetable trial of the following cucumber varieties: Marketmore 76, Raider, Straight 8, Stonewall, and Indy. 75% were direct seeded into the ground between May 5 and June 6, 2003. 50% of the varieties were planted in hills and 50% used some type of mulch. Half of the growers researched information on the varieties and 25% used some form of irrigation.

Germination and Growth: Six seeds of each variety were planted. Raider had a germination of 85%, Stonewall germinated at 77% followed closely by Straight 8 at 75%. Lower end of the germination was Marketmore 76 at 60% and Indy at 54%. Straight 8 was reported as having 100% long vine growth. Other varieties received a mixed rating on their vine growth.

Plant Growth Factors: Insects did not cause any major problems, but one grower reported having a few cucumber beetles. Half of the growers reported disease and they had used a pesticide to help control the outbreak. Critter pest for half of the growers was deer. Too much rainfall was reported by 75% of the growers. Stonewall and Indy exhibited a green color, while Marketmore 76 was dark green in color. Raider and Straight 8 got mixed ratings for color.

Harvest Yields: Overall average yield of all the varieties was 23 cucumbers. Marketmore 76 yield average was 35 cucumbers giving it the highest yield and Indy had the lowest average yield at 15 cucumbers. Average length for all the varieties was 7 inches. Marketmore 76 exhibited the longest average length at 7.5 inches and Indy had the shortest average length at 6.6 inches.

Descriptions: Cucumbers are used for slicing and pickling, hence color, linear straightness, uniformity, taste, and texture are the areas that growers examined. Growers ranked the cucumbers in the following order for raw flavor: Marketmore 76, Straight 8, Stonewall, Indy, and Raider. When asked about raw texture, the varieties were ranked Marketmore 76 first, tied for second were Straight 8 and Stonewall, Indy and Raider were at the bottom.

Results: Straight 8 was ranked best in the overall ranking with Raider ranking the least. Raider had the best germination rating with Indy having the least. Marketmore 76 had the best raw flavor and texture ratings. In looking at color characteristics in the catalog description and comparing to the growers' results, Marketmore 76 was the variety that showed the dark green color as listed. The other varieties received mixed ratings on color and did not match the catalog listed description.