

2006 Home Demonstration Gardens

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Introduction

Home demonstration gardens were located at nine sites across the state. The objective was to grow, display, and compare a wide variety of vegetables and flowers. Some of the themes for the 2006 garden included a plethora of peppers, unusual green melons, geraniums, ornamental pigweed, and a food guide pyramid garden.

Materials and Methods

Most seedlings were grown in the ISU Horticulture greenhouses in Ames, IA. The transplants were transported and planted at research farms by the end of May. A few plants for the food guide pyramid garden (beets, carrots, beans, spinach, etc.) were directly seeded at each garden.

Limited fertilizer and pesticides were used. Plants were watered at planting and then as needed throughout the growing season. The amount of water applied at each garden varied considerably due to weather conditions.

Results and Discussion

In general, all peppers, geranium, amaranth, and plants for the food guide pyramid garden performed beautifully at all research farms. Forty cultivars of peppers were grown at each farm with at least nine cultivars from each of the following groups: bell, sweet, hot, and ornamental peppers. Observational data on peppers is presented in Table 1.

No differences were observed in the geranium series of cultivars (Elite, Multi-bloom, Orbit, Maverick, Ringo 200, Ripple, Black Velvet, and Pinto). All grew and bloomed well throughout the growing season, often without deadheading to encourage repeat blooms.

The performance of the unusual green melons (Boule d'Or, Passport, Arava, Amy, Savor, Sugar Nut, and Honey Orange) was not consistent. Some cultivars performed well at some farms while dying prematurely at other farms.

Twelve accessions of ornamental pigweeds or amaranth were donated from the North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station in Ames, IA. Most of the accessions grew and bloomed well at all farms. At a few of the farms, number 603899 (Splendens Perfecta type) and 553073 (Love lies Bleeding type) did not survive. Accessions 566897 (Kerala Red type), 604461 (Elephant Head type), and the two ISU introductions (Pillar Orange and Pillar Red) were popular with field day attendees.

Acknowledgments

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Table 1. Comparison of forty pepper cultivars grown at nine ISU Research and Demonstration Farms from May to August 2006.

| Type | Cultivar | Comments |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Bell | Blushing Beauty | Green to white to red; early |
| | Fat N Sassy | Green to red; large bell |
| | Golden Bell | Green to gold; blocky bell |
| | Gourmet | Green to orange; blocky bell |
| | Islander | Green to lavender to red; early |
| | New Ace | Green to red; elongated bell |
| | Orange Sun | Green to orange; blocky bell |
| | Purple Beauty | Green to purple to red; early |
| | Super Heavyweight | Green to gold; large bell |
| Sweet | Antohi Romanian | Green to red; large tapered pepper |
| | Apple | Green to red; triangular pepper |
| | Banana Bill | Green to yellow to red; tapered pepper |
| | Biscayne | Green to yellow/green; tapered pepper |
| | Carmen | Green to red; large tapered pepper |
| | Cherry Pick | Green to red; small round pepper |
| | Round of Hungary | Green to red; large rounded pepper; late |
| | Sweet Hungarian | Green to yellow to red; tapered pepper |
| | Sweet Spot | Green to yellow to red; tapered pepper |
| Hot | Balloon | Green to orange; heirloom; unusual shape; late |
| | Big Chili II | Green to red; Anaheim pepper |
| | Bulgarian Carrot | Green to orange; small heirloom pepper; early |
| | Caribbean Red | Green to red; Habanero pepper; late |
| | Hot Lemon | Green to yellow; small, narrow pepper |
| | Jalapeno M | Green to reddish purple; jalapeno type |
| | Long Slim Cayenne | Green to red; large, tapered pepper; early |
| | Mariachi | Green to red; large, triangular pepper; early |
| | Mucho Nacho | Green to reddish purple; jalapeno type |
| | Pablano/Ancho | Green to red; triangular pepper |
| | Senorita | Green to reddish purple; jalapeno type |
| | Thai Hot | Green to red; small, narrow pepper; late |
| Ornamental | Black Pearl | Green to purple to red; purple foliage; early |
| | Chilly Chilli | Green to yellow, orange, and red; compact habit; early |
| | Fish | Green to white to red; heirloom, variegated leaves; few plants survived |
| | Marbles | Green to white, yellow, orange, or red; small, round peppers; compact habit |
| | Nippon Taka | Green to red; long, narrow peppers |
| | Numex Twilight | Green to purple, yellow, and red |
| | Pretty in Purple | Green to purple to red; purple and green leaves |
| | Tangerine Dream | Green to orange; small tapered peppers |