



North Dakota Home Garden Variety Trials

SUMMARY
2024

Summary of Results

A team of volunteers in North Dakota and surrounding states/provinces evaluated promising vegetable and cut flower varieties. Gardeners at 365 sites submitted results. They rated varieties for health, earliness, yield and food/ornamental quality. Reports of 1,645 side-by-side comparisons were submitted.

In each report, they noted which of the two varieties they preferred (Pref) and which of the varieties they would recommend (Rec) to other

gardeners. They had the option of recommending one, both or neither of the varieties in each trial.

The gardeners rated the performance of each variety using a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = poor and 10 = excellent. The preference and recommendation percentages as well as mean ratings for each variety are presented below along with our conclusions. Additional data and comments from gardeners are in the full report available at our website.



Bean, Green Bush

Tendergreen Improved plants were more productive, healthier and sprawled more. *Blue Lake Superior* plants were upright, compact and sturdy. *Blue Lake* beans are famous for their quality, but *Tendergreen Improved* matched its quality.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
B. Lake Superior	37	69	7.29
Tendergreen Impr.	63	83	8.03
(43 sites)			



Bean, Yellow Bush

Both varieties produced good crops of delicious beans. *Custard* produced much earlier and higher yields in more gardens. Gardeners were impressed with the quality of *Golden Goal* pods; its pods were golden, straight and smooth.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Custard	58	89	7.26
Golden Goal	42	78	7.30
(28 sites)			



Bean, Green Filet Bush

Compass germinated better, had healthier plants, produced first, and had a very high yield per plant. *Grenada* germinated poorly across sites; the reason for this is unknown but disappointing. Both varieties produced slim, tasty beans.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Compass	63	75	7.38
Grenada	37	44	5.58
(56 sites)			



Beet, Gold

Most gardeners preferred *Golden Boy*. It germinated better at most sites. *Boldor* received higher scores for the look of its roots. *Golden Boy* received higher scores for the taste of its roots. Yields of the two varieties were similar.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Boldor	46	62	6.77
Golden Boy	54	77	6.92
(22 sites)			



Beet, Red

These varieties received similar ratings for yield and root qualities. Both varieties grew well. They were great for pickling and eating fresh. *Bohan* was a very reliable producer across sites and was recommended by more gardeners.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Bohan	53	86	8.07
Boro	47	72	7.68
(61 sites)			



Carrot, Early

Naval and *Istanbul* grew well and produced similar yields of quality carrots. *Naval* roots were blunt tipped, more uniform, more attractive and tasted sweeter. *Istanbul* roots were pointed, longer and more subject to breaking during harvest.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Istanbul	32	80	7.65
Naval	68	85	8.20
(59 sites)			



Carrot Large Nantes Organic

Caravel produced a higher yield at more sites. Its roots were beautiful, large, very uniform and straight. More gardeners preferred the taste of *Caravel*. *Negovia* performed well but did not excel in any trait. Both varieties had strong tops.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Caravel</i>	63	85	8.10
<i>Negovia</i>	38	71	7.68
(71 sites)			



Carrot, Red

Rubypak produced higher yields. Its roots were more attractive and better tasting compared to the roots of *Red Sun*. Every gardener preferred *Rubypak* over *Red Sun*. Red carrots in general were not very popular among growers.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Red Sun</i>	0	50	6.25
<i>Rubypak</i>	100	88	7.25
(8 sites)			



Corn, Early Super Sweet

Bolt was impressive. It germinated better than *Catalyst* in the cool, wet soils we experienced this spring. *Bolt* was ready to harvest earlier and produced higher yields at more sites. Both varieties produced good yields of ears that tasted good.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Bolt</i>	73	80	7.74
<i>Catalyst</i>	27	40	6.53
(22 sites)			



Corn, Midseason Super Sweet

Neither variety generated much excitement. Their ratings were okay but not very impressive. *Signature* was preferred by most gardeners. *Signature* produced a higher yield at more sites. Both varieties were susceptible to wind damage.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Hero</i>	42	60	6.09
<i>Signature</i>	58	55	6.41
(29 sites)			



Corn, Late Super Sweet

Kate excelled in all traits. *Kate* germinated better. Its stalks were stronger, more vigorous and more productive. *Kate* was delicious. Its ears were well filled out and tasted better than *Crave*. Most gardeners did not recommend *Crave*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Crave</i>	20	40	5.93
<i>Kate</i>	80	73	7.73
(16 sites)			



Corn, White Super Sweet

Eden germinated far better than *Natural Bright*. Its stalks were healthy, sturdy and produced higher yields. *Eden* received higher ratings for ear qualities. *Natural Bright* did not excel in any trait; most gardeners did not recommend it.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Eden</i>	78	67	7.78
<i>Natural Bright</i>	22	44	5.44
(9 sites)			



Cucumber, Japanese

Both varieties were impressive. They produced cucumbers that were crisp, tasty, thin-skinned and had few seeds. *Sashimi* produced the first cucumbers. *Summer Dance* had vigorous vines that produced higher yields at more sites.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Sashimi</i>	44	69	7.42
<i>Summer Dance</i>	56	78	7.69
(63 sites)			



Cucumber, Pickling

Avenger and *Super Max* vines were healthy and produced excellent yields. *Avenger* produced the first fruits, but *Super Max* produced higher yields at more sites. *Super Max* cucumbers were uniform, crunchy and tasty.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Avenger</i>	33	71	7.24
<i>Super Max</i>	67	79	7.81
(46 sites)			



Cucumber, Slicing

Gardeners split evenly on their preferred variety. Gardeners liked the fruit quality of both varieties. Their fruits were crisp and sweet with small seed cavities. The vines were healthy. *Stonewall* produced higher yields at more sites.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Gateway	50	71	6.52
Stonewall	50	67	6.81
(27 sites)			



Cucumber, Snack

The vines of both varieties were healthy and produced abundantly. Their fruits had good flavor and crunch. *Green Light* has excelled in our trials for years, but *Snack* matched it in earliness, yield and fruit quality traits.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Green Light	47	81	7.70
Snack	53	78	7.66
(76 sites)			



Greens, Komatsuna

Many trials experienced major infestations of flea beetles. *Green River* had healthier plants and higher yields at more sites. Nearly all gardeners never grew komatsuna before, and many of them reported the greens were too bitter in taste.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Green River	57	59	6.56
Malachai	43	52	6.22
(30 sites)			



Lettuce, Oakleaf

Gardeners liked both varieties and rated them similarly for most traits. *Bauer* resisted bolting better and produced higher yields at more sites. Gardeners who preferred *Hampton* often mentioned its crisp and flavorful leaves.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Bauer	46	79	7.79
Hampton	54	79	7.36
(14 sites)			



Lettuce, Romaine

Both varieties were healthy, productive and resisted bolting. Many gardeners preferred the look of *Bluerock*. Its heads were large, beautiful and bright green. Many gardeners preferred the smooth, slightly sweet taste of *Sunland*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Bluerock	52	83	7.89
Sunland	48	87	7.91
(53 sites)			



Lettuce, Green Summer Crisp Organic

Both varieties produced well and resisted bolting. Most gardeners preferred *Muir*. *Muir* was ready to harvest earlier and produced a larger crop in more gardens. *Albachiara* leaves were darker green, crisp and flavorful.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Albachiara	42	76	7.93
Muir	58	83	8.17
(47 sites)			



Lettuce, Red Summer Crisp Organic

Gardeners liked both varieties. *Chrystal* germinated better, was healthier, grew faster and produced more abundantly. Its plants had ruffled leaves and looked prettier. Both varieties tolerated heat; *Lovelock* showed greater resistance to bolting.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Chrystal	72	84	7.63
Lovelock	28	80	6.75
(26 sites)			



Melon, Cantaloupe Early

Both varieties had healthy vines but only fair yields. Growers were evenly divided on which variety had superior fruit quality. *Goddess* melons ripened earlier than *Cleopatra* melons, and *Goddess* was recommended by more gardeners.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Cleopatra	48	62	6.97
Goddess	52	76	6.93
(41 sites)			



Melon, Cantaloupe Open-Pollinated

Dakota Sisters germinated better, ripened earlier, produced higher yields and had better flavor. Melons of both varieties were fairly small in size. Yields were reduced due to the cool, wet spring conditions. *Iroquois* did not excel in any trait.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Dakota Sisters	78	72	7.44
Iroquois	22	44	5.94
(26 sites)			



Okra, Green

Buffalo Bill 91 matured earlier and produced more pods. Its pods were deep green, very attractive and stayed tender. *Clemson Spineless 80* has always done well in our previous trials, but it was overmatched by *Buffalo Bill 91*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Buffalo Bill 91	69	100	8.38
Clemson Sp. 80	31	62	7.08
(15 sites)			



Pumpkin, Midsize

Both varieties produced dark orange, beautiful pumpkins. Their semi-bush vines were surprisingly vigorous. *Spartacus* pumpkins turned orange sooner, and it produced a higher yield. *Spartacus* fruits were rounded; *Hawk* fruits were taller.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Hawk	32	74	7.30
Spartacus	68	89	8.00
(27 sites)			



Pumpkin, Large

Everest pumpkins were larger and judged to be more attractive by more gardeners. Gardeners were expecting larger fruits from both varieties. Both varieties were susceptible to powdery mildew.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Everest	55	87	7.55
Gemini	45	78	7.36
(28 sites)			



Pumpkin, Gray

Blue Doll pumpkins were larger, and gardeners loved the look of its deeply ribbed fruits. *Blue Ice* ripened earlier and produced a higher yield at more sites. The pumpkins of both varieties were wonderful for decorating and cooking.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Blue Doll	57	83	7.25
Blue Ice	43	79	6.75
(26 sites)			



Pumpkin, White

Abominable germinated better and matured earlier. It produced more fruits and bigger fruits. *Abominable* pumpkins were true white with beautiful, contrasting dark green handles. The performance of *Stella Luna* was disappointing.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Abominable	79	89	8.00
Stella Luna	21	26	4.84
(22 sites)			



Squash, Gray Zucchini

Mexicana produced an earlier harvest and higher yields overall. *Mexicana* fruits were more attractive to many gardeners. A few gardeners noted the mild flavor of *Hurakan*, but most gardeners did not recommend the variety.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Hurakan	30	45	7.55
Mexicana	70	91	8.18
(12 sites)			



Squash, Green Zucchini

Gardeners rated *Dunja* and *Kefren* similarly for all traits. Their vines were compact with an open habit, making them easy to harvest. Yields were abundant. *Dunja* vines were extremely productive and stayed healthy late into the growing season.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Dunja	57	78	7.77
Kefren	43	85	7.54
(31 sites)			



Squash, Yellow Summer

The vines of both varieties were healthy and productive. Most gardeners preferred *Butterfingers*. Its vines produced the first fruits. Many gardeners felt *Butterfingers* fruits were more attractive and tasted better than *Goldfinch* fruits.

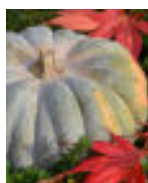
Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Butterfingers	69	93	7.85
Goldfinch	31	71	7.15
(15 sites)			



Squash, Orange Kabocha

Both varieties were productive, but the yields of *Madonna* were amazing. Gardeners liked the beautiful, orange-red color of the fruits of both varieties. *Madonna* fruits were usually slightly smaller in size and good for single servings.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Madonna	53	76	7.67
Sunshine	47	73	7.48
(35 sites)			



Squash, Specialty Kabocha

The fruits of both varieties were good for decorating and eating. Gardeners especially liked the green and orange splotchy rinds of *Speckled Hound*. Every gardener with a taste preference preferred *Pink Panther*. Yields were similar.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Pink Panther	60	83	7.50
Speckled Hound	40	83	7.20
(16 sites)			



Squash, Spaghetti

Both varieties performed well. Their fruits were uniform in shape, size and color. *Pinnacle* ripened earlier at more sites. *Primavera* produced higher yields at more sites. Taste preferences were evenly split among the varieties.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Pinnacle	44	88	7.63
Primavera	56	76	7.56
(21 sites)			



Swiss Chard, Mixed Colors

Bright Lights outshone *Celebration* in all respects. *Bright Lights* germinated better, grew faster and produced a higher yield. Its leaves were more colorful. Nearly all gardeners who expressed a taste preference preferred *Bright Lights*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Bright Lights	74	92	8.92
Celebration	26	64	7.42
(27 sites)			



Tomato, Bright Red Heirloom

Gardeners were pleased with the health and yields of both varieties. Most gardeners preferred *Wisconsin 55*. *Wisconsin 55* fruits were larger and had robust flavor. *Crimson Sprinter* got off to a quick start and produced the first fruits.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Crimson Sprinter	44	70	7.20
Wisconsin 55	56	80	7.20
(15 sites)			



Tomato, Determinate Heirloom

Both varieties had compact plants yet produced good yields. *Manitoba* vines were healthier, produced earlier and produced more fruits. More gardeners preferred the taste of *Manitoba*. *Sheyenne* did not excel in any measured trait.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Manitoba	68	65	7.10
Sheyenne	32	57	6.46
(75 sites)			



Tomato, Small Fruit

Yields were prolific. *Juliet* produced tomatoes earlier and produced more tomatoes overall. Gardeners were excited by the flame-looking stripes on *Red Torch* fruits. Gardeners were split on their taste preferences.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Juliet	56	47	7.47
Red Torch	44	65	7.71
(22 sites)			



Watermelon, Red

Sweet Dakota Rose produced the first melons and had higher yields. The melons of *Sweet Dakota Rose* were especially sweet, flavorful and crisp. Gardeners liked the taste, larger size and classic, oblong shape of *Jamboree* melons.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Jamboree	21	52	5.76
Swt Dakota Rose	79	72	6.59
(40 sites)			



Watermelon, Red Seedless

Several gardeners struggled with the germination and transplanting of these varieties. *Sweet Dawn* matured earlier, had bigger and more attractive melons, and tasted very sweet. Most gardeners did not recommend *Dark Knight*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Dark Knight	22	44	6.67
Sweet Dawn	78	67	7.11
(20 sites)			



Marigold, Yellow Cutting

Both varieties grew vigorously and produced large, beautiful flowers until frost. *Giant Yellow* plants grew slightly taller and bloomed earlier at most sites. Its blooms were bright yellow while the blooms of *Hedge Mary Yellow* were golden yellow.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Giant Yellow	57	80	8.00
Hedge Mary Yell.	43	74	7.97
(39 sites)			



Sunflower, Fluffy

Both varieties received high ratings from gardeners. Most gardeners preferred *Just Crazy*. They loved the informal, ragged look of its flowers. *Greenburst DMR* plants were taller, healthier and produced more blooms at more sites.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Greenburst DMR	38	75	7.94
Just Crazy	63	81	8.19
(24 sites)			



Sunflower, Gold Branching

Golden Ray stalks were taller, sturdier and bloomed earlier. *Golden Ray* flowers were larger and more abundant. The flower spikes of both varieties made fabulous bouquets and were great in cut flower arrangements.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Concert Bell	41	67	7.41
Golden Ray	59	78	7.82
(22 sites)			



Sunflower, Gold Single-Stem

Both varieties grew consistently well. *ProCut Bravo* was healthy, vigorous and grew slightly taller. It bloomed earlier at more sites. More gardeners felt *ProCut Bravo* blooms were prettier compared to the blooms of *ProCut Orange DMR*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
ProCut Bravo	53	87	7.87
ProCut Orange	47	80	7.40
(18 sites)			



Sunflower, Bicolor Dwarf

Tinies germinated much better, grew taller, bloomed earlier and produced more flowers. The bright red and orange blooms of *Little Tiger* stood out in gardens. In contrast, the blooms of *Tinies* appeared in soft and muted colors.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Little Tiger	46	54	5.92
Tinies	54	85	7.23
(15 sites)			



Sunflower, Double-Petal Dwarf

Gardeners loved the cute, fluffy flowers of both varieties. *Baby Bear* rated higher than *Teddy Bear* in all traits. *Baby Bear* germinated better, bloomed earlier and produced more flowers. *Baby Bear* blooms were pollenless; good for cutting.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Baby Bear	57	93	8.43
Teddy Bear	43	79	6.64
(17 sites)			



Sunflower, Gold Dwarf

Smiley germinated better, was healthier, and looked prettier to most gardeners. *Junior* bloomed earlier. *Junior* flowers were bright, and they lasted long as a cut flower. Several gardeners were surprised how short these varieties were.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Junior	36	67	6.83
Smiley	64	75	7.25
			(13 sites)



Sunflower, Yellow Dwarf

Munchkin germinated better, grew taller, produced more flowers and was much prettier overall. *Lemon Pixie* lacked vigor and was a disappointment. Most gardeners did not recommend *Lemon Pixie*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Munchkin	71	71	7.29
Yellow Pixie	29	43	5.43
			(9 sites)



Zinnia, Flaming

Both mixes were easy to grow, bloomed prolifically and made wonderful cut flowers. Their flower colors were bold and bright. *South of the Border* bloomed earlier at more sites; it had a greater variety of colors including some bicolors.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Lava Lamp	49	87	8.38
So. of the Border	51	81	8.15
			(56 sites)



Zinnia, Fruity Dessert

Gardeners enjoyed both mixes. These mixes contain many of the same varieties, and they performed similarly. The flowers of *Fruity Beauty* were vibrant while the flowers of *Peach Cobbler* came in a greater variety of pleasing colors.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Fruity Beauty	53	89	8.47
Peach Cobbler	47	89	8.21
			(22 sites)



Zinnia, Pink

Both mixes were pretty. The plants were tall and healthy, producing many blooms. *Blushing Bride* grew robustly, and its blooms had a blend of soft and charming colors. The colors of *Strawberry Parfait* flowers were brighter and more intense.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Blushing Bride	57	83	8.15
Strawberry Parfait	43	83	7.78
			(48 sites)



Zinnia, Purple and Yellow Dessert

Both varieties produced loads of beautiful flowers. Gardeners loved the purple, lavender and white colors of *Blueberry Cheesecake*. *Lemon Meringue* had full, large blooms with sturdy stems. These mixes attracted a lot of pollinators.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Blueberry Cheese.	66	91	8.47
Lemon Meringue	34	78	7.81
			(42 sites)

Photo Credits

Photos in this document are adapted from photos made available under Creative Commons licenses specified by the photographer, all allowing for adaptation, modification or building upon. Prefixes of photos are www.flickr.com/photos/, unless noted otherwise.

COVER: garten-gg from Pixabay. **BEAN:** Seacoast Eat Local, .../seacoateatlocal/36094591445; Alice Henneman.../alicehenneman/6120192853/; gravity_grave, .../laureenp/5042670724/. **BEET:** Niccie King, .../whatniccieate/9428003125/; woodleywonderworks. .../wwworks/7670932230/. **CARROT:** congerdesign from Pixabay; wal_172619 from Pixabay; rnourse01, .../rnourse/6818183683/. **CORN:** liz west, .../calliope/7564086796/; shannonpatrick17, .../shannonpatrick17/2741977165/; All-America Selections; judybaxter, .../judybaxter/3648260751/. **CUCUMBER:** Timothy Takemoto, .../nihonbunka/12878137/; All-America Selections; National Garden Bureau; All-America Selections. **KOMATSUNA:** 305 Seahill, .../bluehillranch/11956510216/. **LETTUCE:** All-America Selections; Mercedes, .../lawrencefarmersmarket/2529145266/; Dwight Sipler, .../photofarmer/4988502522/; B, .../11561957@N06/

18349858178/. **MELON:** Michelle Martin from Pixabay; Hans Braxmeier from Pixabay. **OKRA:** David Hoffman, /universalpops/6528971651/. **PUMPKIN:** ZakVTA, .../isaachsieh/2974054622/; jjjj56cp, .../25171569@N02/10054547606/; All-America Selections; wintersoul1, .../aquariawintersoul/5044457900/. **SQUASH:** daosorio from Pixabay; ilovebutter, .../jdickert/852904568/; Mike Licht, .../notionscapital/12736528224/; All-America Selections; Inn from Pixabay; Timothy Valentine, .../el_ramon/51177043230/. **SWISS CHARD:** looseends, .../lunaspin/4703178869/. **TOMATO:** All-America Selections (2); Robert Otani, .../treborinato/2625305989/. **WATERMELON:** pasja1000 from Pixabay; All-America Selections/. **MARIGOLD:** All-America Selections. **SUNFLOWER:** Swallowtail Garden Seeds, .../swallowtailgardenseeds/48904648121/; All-America Selections; Domiriel, .../domiriel/7426033500/; Swallowtail Garden Seeds, .../swallowtailgardenseeds/36472461145/; Janice Staines. .../50282301@N07/15349938205/; biwanoki, .../biwanoki/23259185/; Uschi Dugulin from Pixabay. **ZINNIA:** Urszula from Pixabay; Martin LaBar, .../martinlabar/48692804886/; Teodor Buhl from Pixabay (2); Jan Haerer from Pixabay.

NDSU

EXTENSION

Written by Tom Kalb, Extension Horticulturist
North Dakota State University Extension

Contact information:

Tom Kalb, Ph.D.
North Dakota State University
2005 N. Kavancy Drive, Suite A
Bismarck, ND 58501
tom.kalb@ndsu.edu

For more information on the North Dakota Home Garden Variety Trials Program, go to <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/homegardenvarietytrials/>.

This is an academic report published for educational purposes only. This project is supported by the North Dakota State Board of Agricultural Research and Education.

December 2024

NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 201, (701) 231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu.