

Veggie Vote

Vvi - Vegetable varieties investigation



Standards (NYS): Science: 1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, ELA 1, 3, Social Studies 5.3, 5.4

Purpose

This activity gives participants a chance to become familiar with some of the varietal characteristics that gardeners consider when selecting what to grow, and allows participants to determine what qualities are most important for their own purposes.

Overview

Students open an envelope with profiles of three different varieties of a particular crop, (either lettuce or beets). They are given a scenario that requires them to select only one variety of the crop to grow. Based on the information they have for each of the candidates, which “candidate” will they vote for and why? Can students defend their choice well, and convince others to also “vote” for their candidate?

Materials

- One 9X12” envelope beets with three variety profiles (Warrior, Chioggia, Golden)
- One 9X12” envelope lettuce with three variety profiles (Black Seeded Simpson, Freckles, Red Sails)
- Blank paper
- Pencils/pens

Time

15-30 minutes

Instructions

Set out envelopes along with the following scenario:

Background: Your school has just received a grant to start a small vegetable garden. You have to make good use of your space, and only have room for one variety of each crop. You want to convince the others in your school garden group to vote for your variety “candidate.”

1. Divide the group into pairs or groups of three.
2. Instruct students to choose one envelope, and read through the profiles of each “candidate.” Each profile includes a photo, description, and gardener reviews.
3. Using the photo, descriptions and reviews available and their imagination groups should pick a “candidate” to support.
4. Each group will then create a one paragraph campaign to convince your school garden committee that this is the best variety to grow. Be persuasive!
5. Write the name of your winner and your “campaign speech” on a piece of paper.
6. Once you and the other groups are done, take turns giving your campaign speech to the whole group. If you chose different candidates, which speech is more persuasive? Take a vote and find out!

Taking it further

Follow up with a discussion about current political candidates and popular strategies for “getting the vote.” Did you use some of these strategies to campaign for your variety?



Chioggia Beets

Description

Early, heirloom, flattish-round, red beet. Sometimes called the Candystripe for the concentric pink and white rings in its root. Ornamental plants.

Days To Maturity: 45-55

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from VA

Beets are sometimes a challenge in my garden's clay soil, but I liked this variety; I thought it produced bigger, earlier roots than 'Early Wonder Tall Top'. Doesn't bleed, which is a great advantage for cooking, but still very tasty, delicate beet flavor. Not super-productive (about 3 pounds from 10 row feet), but I would grow it again.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from BC

Really great to look at, but picky to grow and not flavourful at all. I'll skip these this year. Probably a great variety for kids to grow due to the novelty.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from OR

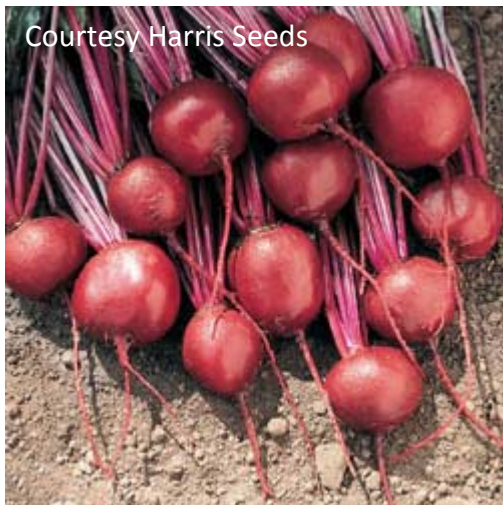
They are wonderful, but darn it, they want to be babied, and I just don't have time for that nonsense. :-)

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from CA

Easy to grow, but not worth the trouble. Very bland. Tasted more like turnips.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from PA

These have been the most trouble free beets I have grown to date. They produce sweet beets that are very good. They grew very quickly as well. Not overpoweringly sweet, which some may not like, but they are definitely sweet. They are a pretty target/ringed beet when sliced crossways.



Warrior Beets

Description

Hybrid. Dark-red, globe-shaped, smooth-textured, uniform, tender roots develop quickly and hold quality. Strong tops tinged with red, especially in cold weather.

Days To Maturity: 57

★★★★★ Reviewer: from Wayne County, NY

Very good variety. I have planted this variety for the last 5 years with no issues.

★★★★★ Reviewer: from NE

Where beets didn't do well, these made a nice crop. Taste was excellent, and a really tender texture. This is an outstanding variety. I had some old seed (at least 4 years old) that I found this spring. I planted a few as a test, great germination, and beets are growing strong and healthy. Great variety, my vote for best beet by more than a mile!!!



Golden Beets

Description

Orange-yellow root with yellow-stemmed, green tops used in salads when small.

Days To Maturity: 55

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from GA

I find the golden types to be less vigorous than the red types.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from Monroe County, NY

Attractive, tasty, not terribly big roots.

Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce



Courtesy High Mowing Seeds

Description

Looseleaf type. Heirloom. Light-green, crumpled leaves can be picked very young and are never bitter. Stands hot weather and drought.

Days To Maturity: 42-46

★★★★★ Reviewer: from Suffolk County, NY

Just the best lettuce ever! Grow it in windowbox type containers and harvest leaves as needed, overwinter in a sunny window for year round harvest. In the heat of summer (90+ degrees) move to an afternoon shade area and it won't bolt or go bitter.

★★★★★ Reviewer: from IL

This is an excellent traditional green lettuce. Produced well, and easy to grow. I always picked it young, and it made a terrific salad.

★★★★★ Reviewer: from Suffolk County, NY

Reminds me of my childhood. It's easy and pretty, especially with a sweet red salad dressing.



Courtesy Seeds of Change, Scott Vlaun



Freckles Lettuce

Description

Cos (romaine) type. 8- to 10-inch heads with semi-savoyed, bright-green leaves covered with dark-red speckles. Meaty leaves are slow to turn bitter. Pick baby leaves at 28 days.

Days To Maturity: 28-55

★★★★★ Reviewer: from VT

Well described above. Pretty. If allowed to go to seed, it volunteers nicely on it's own = good for low effort gardening.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from PA

Very pretty Romaine type lettuce with the nice crunch you expect from a Romaine. The speckles make this one very special to look at. Flavor is laid back, as many lettuces are. In other words it is a mellow, slightly sweet flavor with great crunch and a beautiful appearance on the plate. Easy to grow, and as mentioned by another reviewer the slugs (and I have loads of slugs) do not seem terribly interested in it.

★★★★★ Reviewer: from IN

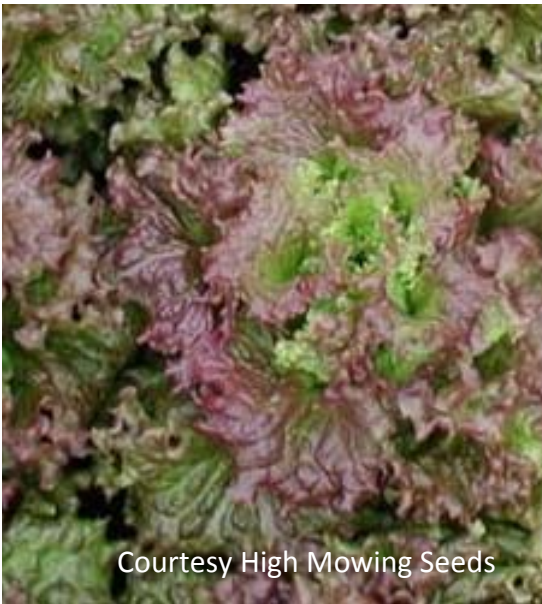
I love beautiful food and this lettuce is one of my favorites. It is easy to grow and tastes great. I sow it somewhat thickly and thin for leafy greens early in the season, making room for the heads to grow. Tolerates the heat well with protection from row covers. I will continue to grow this Vitamin-B rich romaine.

★★★★★ Reviewer: from Hamilton County, NY

Soft and Mellow taste. Slugs avoided. Good yield in Zone 3-4. Second planting also did well.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from Cattaraugus County, NY

very nice romaine.70 days to maturity in my area. good late season lettuce.



Red Sails Lettuce

Description

Looseleaf type. Very open plants with deep-burgundy-red over light-green leaves that are slow to become bitter. Fast-growing, heat-tolerant, and relatively slow to bolt. Pick for baby leaves at 29 days. Grows well indoors under lights. All America Selection 1985.

Days To Maturity: 29-55

★★★★★ Reviewer: from CT

I find that this grows very easily in early spring and all through the summer. I can plant this in the heat of July and it produces fantastically great. Great soft sweet lettuce.

★★★☆☆ Reviewer: from CA

I have had more problems with this lettuce than any other. Possibly because I gave it so many, many tries. It gets rave reviews, but it has never lived up to my most modest expectations. Red Sails has a higher juvenile mortality rate than the other lettuces, easily blown flat by rain or wind. I haven't got to the hoop-tunnel stage yet, and don't plan to, so Red Sails is out. I prefer hardier types of leaf lettuce. Also, it is not nearly as bolt-resistance as many of the claims would have it. Big thumbs down.

★★★★★ Reviewer: from NC

One of our favorites. Excellent yield, slow to bolt. Adds color and taste to salads. Seed is cheap at our local bulk seed dealer.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from Erie County, NY

It's very ornamental & that's why I grow it. Colorful in a salad.

★★★★☆ Reviewer: from CA

My favorite lettuce. I plant in succession all year long. We use it in salads and feed it to our tortoises. They love it too.