

# North Dakota Home Garden Variety Trials

SUMMARY  
2023

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

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# Summary of Results

A team of volunteers in North Dakota and surrounding states/provinces evaluated promising vegetable and cut flower varieties. Gardeners at over 437 sites rated varieties for health, earliness, yield and food/ornamental quality. Reports of 1,646 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 rated the performance of each variety using a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = poor and 10 = excellent. The mean rating is presented in this summary.

The following is a summary of data, including our conclusions for each trial. Additional data and comments from gardeners are in the full report available at <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/homegardenvarietytrials/results>.



## Bean, Green Bush

*Homerun* was a big hit. It was healthier, earlier maturing and more productive at more sites. Both varieties produced good yields of flavorful beans. *Homerun* beans were attractive as they were darker green, slender and consistently straight.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Caprice	23	63	6.76
Homerun	77	91	8.18
			(63 sites)



## Bean, Green Bush Organic

Gardeners liked both varieties. The plants of both varieties were healthy and productive. *Red Tail* received very high ratings. Gardeners especially liked its pods, which were dark green, smooth, glossy and straight.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Antigua	47	83	7.79
Red Tail	53	95	8.32
			(20 sites)



## Bean, Yellow Bush

Both varieties germinated well. Their plants were sturdy and produced delicious, bright yellow pods. *Custard* had healthier plants and earlier harvests at more sites. Gardeners enjoyed the tender, tasty beans of *Gold Rush*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Custard	56	88	8.12
Gold Rush	44	76	7.64
			(28 sites)



## Bean, Purple Pole

Both varieties had healthy vines with gorgeous, purple flowers. *Carminat* pods were longer, thinner and more tender. *Purple Podded* vines grew vigorously. *Purple Podded* produced earlier and higher yields. Its pods were thicker and meatier.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Carminat	54	72	6.58
Purple Podded	46	68	6.63
			(27 sites)



## Beet, Gold

Both varieties grew well. Their roots were beautiful and delicious. *Golden Boy* produced higher yields and had more attractive roots. More gardeners preferred the sweeter taste of *Yellow Sunrise*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Golden Boy	59	81	7.14
Yellow Sunrise	41	76	7.35
			(23 sites)



## Beet, Red

These varieties received similar ratings, especially for taste. Gardeners were evenly split on their preferences. *Bresko* had beautiful greens, high yields and sweet roots. *Red Cloud* roots were larger, round, sweet and attractive.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Bresko	50	78	7.44
Red Cloud	50	81	7.61
			(39 sites)





### Beet, Red Organic

Both varieties received very high ratings. Gardeners who preferred *Detroit Dark Red* often mentioned its roots were dark red, larger and looked good. Gardeners who preferred *Sweet Dakota Bliss* often thought its roots tasted sweeter.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Detroit Dark Red	50	90	8.30
Swt Dakota Bliss	50	80	8.33
			(39 sites)



### Broccoli

Many gardeners struggled growing these varieties from seed. *Green Magic* produced higher yields. *Gypsy* has a reputation of performing well under hot conditions, but *Green Magic* did just as well in our summer heat.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Green Magic	50	53	6.60
Gypsy	50	53	6.27
			(24 sites)



### Carrot Early Nantes

Both varieties grew well and produced good yields of quality carrots. Many gardeners felt *Narvik* roots tasted sweeter while *Naval* roots were better looking (larger, straighter and more uniform). *Naval* produced higher yields at more sites.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Narvik	51	87	7.98
Naval	49	87	8.02
			(77 sites)



### Carrot, Mainseason Nantes

Gardeners were pleased and gave the varieties similar ratings. Both varieties grew well and produced good yields. Opinions were mixed on which variety looked and tasted better. Gardeners were concerned over misshaped roots.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Jerada	55	79	7.56
Newhall	45	84	7.67
			(45 sites)



### Carrot, Red

Both varieties received fairly low ratings. Nearly all gardeners felt the tastes of these red carrots were bearable but not delicious. Even the distinctive red color of these carrots did not generate much excitement.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Atomic Red	47	53	5.93
Rubypak	53	53	6.40
			(19 sites)



### Carrot, Yellow

*Gold Nugget* was preferred. It germinated better and its roots were sweeter. *Mello Yellow* roots were straight and attractive. Gardeners appreciated the color but not the flavor of these yellow varieties as a complement to orange carrots.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Gold Nugget	75	83	7.58
Mello Yellow	25	50	6.58
			(13 sites)



### Corn, Early Synergistic

Both varieties were healthy and produced good quality corn. *Sweetness* germinated better, grew more vigorously, ripened earlier and produced a higher yield. *Sweetness* has always excelled in our trials. It is an outstanding early corn variety.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Latte	29	63	6.71
Sweetness	71	79	7.58
			(31 sites)



### Corn, Midseason Super Sweet

Both varieties had healthy, sturdy stalks that produced good yields. Most gardeners preferred *Xtra Tender 274A*. It ripened earlier and produced large ears filled with tender kernels. Gardeners who preferred *Rosie* felt it tasted better.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Rosie	35	54	7.13
Xtra Tender 274A	65	79	7.96
			(26 sites)



### Corn, Late Super Sweet

*Kate* grew well but it was overshadowed by the performance of *Troubadour*. *Troubadour* germinated better and ripened earlier. It produced larger ears and higher yields than *Kate*. Gardeners enjoyed the taste of both varieties.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Kate</i>	38	71	7.21
<i>Troubadour</i>	62	86	8.07
			(21 sites)



### Cucumber, Japanese

Gardeners were impressed with the yields and fruit qualities of both varieties. Cucumbers were slender, tasty and free of bitterness. *Sashimi* produced earlier and higher yields at more sites. *Unagi* vines were vigorous and its fruits were smooth.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Sashimi</i>	52	83	7.93
<i>Unagi</i>	48	78	7.83
			(50 sites)



### Cucumber, Pickling

Many gardeners preferred *Avenger* for its crisp, flavorful cucumbers. *Expedition* vines were vigorous, producing earlier and higher yields at more gardens. Some gardeners expressed dissatisfaction in the taste qualities of *Expedition* cucumbers.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Avenger</i>	65	81	7.54
<i>Expedition</i>	35	58	7.51
			(42 sites)



### Cucumber, Slicing

*Bristol* was the better variety. It germinated better, produced earlier and produced a better yield at more sites. More gardeners felt *Bristol* cucumbers were of higher quality. *Diamondback* did not stand out in any particular way.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Bristol</i>	68	71	7.58
<i>Diamondback</i>	32	63	6.83
			(28 sites)



### Cucumber, Snack

Both varieties produced lots of delicious cucumbers. *Green Light* excelled in all traits. Its fruits were sweet, crisp, smooth, slender, straight and flavorful. *Mini-Me* fruits were smaller and less slender. *Mini-Me* vines suffered from diseases.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Green Light</i>	66	87	7.85
<i>Mini-Me</i>	34	56	6.58
			(77 sites)



### Lettuce, Romaine Organic

Both varieties produced good yields of delicious lettuce. They tolerated the heat and *Bluerock* was particularly resistant to bolting. More gardeners preferred the looks and taste of *Bluerock*. *Coastal Star* produced large, full heads quickly.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Bluerock</i>	58	84	7.92
<i>Coastal Star</i>	42	74	7.42
			(46 sites)



### Lettuce, Green Summer Crisp Organic

Both varieties grew well, were slow to bolt, and produced tasty heads. More gardeners felt *Nevada* plants were healthier, more productive and more attractive. *Albachiara* was a strong performer but did not excel in any traits.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Albachiara</i>	43	87	7.53
<i>Nevada</i>	57	77	7.53
			(35 sites)



### Lettuce, Red Summer Crisp Organic

Both varieties were attractive, resisted bolting, produced good yields and tasted delicious. Most gardeners preferred *Magenta*. Its leaves were more colorful and its heads were fuller. *Lovelock* grew quickly and was ready to harvest earlier.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Lovelock</i>	36	88	7.54
<i>Magenta</i>	64	81	8.19
			(35 sites)



### Melon, Cantaloupe Hybrid

Both varieties had healthy vines and produced large melons. More gardeners felt the melons of *Aphrodite* looked better and tasted much better. *Aphrodite* produced earlier and had higher yields at more sites. *Avatar* did not stand out.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Aphrodite</i>	54	69	7.33
<i>Avatar</i>	46	50	6.92
			(30 sites)



### Melon, Cantaloupe Open-Pollinated

Both varieties grew well and had healthy vines. *Dakota Sisters* melons had superior flavor and a firmer texture. *Minnesota Midget* ripened much earlier and produced lots of small melons. These melons were perfect for single-size servings.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Dakota Sisters</i>	59	63	7.09
<i>Minnesota Midget</i>	41	66	6.84
			(38 sites)



### Okra, Green

Both varieties grew well. Most gardeners preferred *Clemson Spineless 80*. They were impressed with its productivity and the texture of its pods. *Jambalaya* ripened earlier. Gardeners liked its uniformly shaped, glossy, dark green pods.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Clemson Sp. 80</i>	54	86	7.86
<i>Jambalaya</i>	46	79	7.43
			(17 sites)



### Onion, Red Organic

*Red Carpet* plants were healthier. Its bulbs were larger and more attractive. *Rossa di Milano* germinated better, matured earlier and produced higher yields. Gardeners liked the taste of both varieties but clearly preferred *Rossa di Milano*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Red Carpet</i>	44	69	6.26
<i>Rossa di Milano</i>	56	77	6.89
			(44 sites)



### Onion, Yellow Organic

*Dakota Tears* produced higher yields. *Talon* germinated quickly and was ready to harvest earlier. *Talon* bulbs were more uniform in shape and had smoother skins. Taste preferences were mixed with an edge going to *Dakota Tears*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Dakota Tears</i>	47	58	6.53
<i>Talon</i>	53	68	7.00
			(39 sites)



### Pea, Snap

*Snak Hero*, a new award winner with beanlike pods, was a huge disappointment. Its germination was very poor. *Sugar Ann* vines were healthier, faster growing and more productive. Its pods were plumper, juicier and sweeter.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Snak Hero</i>	13	30	5.07
<i>Sugar Ann</i>	87	86	8.00
			(93 sites)



### Pepper, Large Bell

Both varieties produced good yields of large, blocky, tasty fruits. *Revolution* yields were earlier and higher. *Revolution* also received higher ratings in fruit appearance and taste. *Vanguard* vines were more vigorous.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Revolution</i>	44	70	8.00
<i>Vanguard</i>	56	50	7.80
			(19 sites)



### Pumpkin, Small Orange

Both varieties germinated well, had healthy vines and were very productive. *Cannon Ball* produced more pumpkins. Its fruits were more attractive and had sturdy stems for kids to carry. *Cannon Ball* consistently performs well in our trials.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Cannon Ball</i>	56	90	8.30
<i>Field Trip</i>	44	60	7.60
			(13 sites)



### Pumpkin, Midsize Orange

Gardeners liked both of these semi-vine varieties. Both varieties produced dark orange, beautiful pumpkins. *Magic Lantern* produced more pumpkins and ripened earlier. The pumpkins of *Zeus* were larger at more sites.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Magic Lantern</i>	43	69	7.50
<i>Zeus</i>	57	77	7.21
			(22 sites)



### Pumpkin, Large Orange

Their vines were healthy and their yields were similar. *Adonis* pumpkins were bigger and its stems were thick and eye catching. *Aladdin* also received solid ratings. Its pumpkins had an upright shape that was good for carving.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Adonis</i>	64	88	7.93
<i>Aladdin</i>	36	75	7.43
			(18 sites)



### Pumpkin, Gray

*Blue Doll* fruits were blocky with deep ribbing. Gardeners preferred those looks over those of *Jarrahdale*, which has a standard globular shape. *Blue Doll* fruits were larger and tasted sweet. *Blue Doll* vines were more productive.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Blue Doll</i>	67	67	6.83
<i>Jarrahdale</i>	33	58	6.33
			(16 sites)



### Pumpkin Pink

*Porcelain Doll* fruits had more of a true, light pink color. This along with the uniform color and size of its pumpkins made them attractive. The vines of *Porcelain Doll* were more productive. *Indian Doll* fruits were good for pies and soups.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Indian Doll</i>	21	64	6.93
<i>Porcelain Doll</i>	79	100	8.36
			(18 sites)



### Pumpkin, Warty

*Warty Goblin* fruits were uniform and globular in shape. Its fruits had lots of showy, dark green warts and were great for decorations. *Scarface* pumpkins were larger and had a more upright shape. Its warts were less conspicuous.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Scarface</i>	36	82	7.55
<i>Warty Goblin</i>	64	73	7.64
			(17 sites)



### Squash, Semi-Crookneck

Gardeners liked both varieties. Their plants were healthy and yields were similar. *Gentry* produced the first fruits. *Tempest* produced the better tasting fruits. This was one of our least popular trials and data are limited.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Gentry</i>	50	75	8.00
<i>Tempest</i>	50	75	8.25
			(5 sites)



### Squash, Straightneck

*Multipik* produced more fruits and its fruits had superior quality. *Smooth Criminal* featured a plant habit with a nearly spineless, central stem to facilitate trellising and harvesting. Gardeners did not notice this. *Smooth Criminal* rated poorly.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Multipik</i>	75	75	6.75
<i>Smooth Criminal</i>	25	25	5.50
			(4 sites)



### Squash, Dark Green Zucchini

Gardeners were pleased with the quantity and quality of the fruits of these varieties. *Dunja* germinated better, produced earlier and produced a higher yield at more sites. *Black Coral* performed well but was not superior in any trait.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Black Coral</i>	38	60	7.17
<i>Dunja</i>	63	80	7.77
			(38 sites)





### Squash, Winter Butternut

Both varieties received similar and solid ratings. Their fruits were tasty with small seed cavities. Gardeners liked the yields of *Granite* and its buttery, nutty taste. *Havana* vines were less vigorous, which is good for gardeners with limited space.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Granite</i>	54	76	7.93
<i>Havana</i>	46	79	8.00
			(34 sites)



### Squash, Winter Kabocha

*Speckled Hound* had vigorous vines that produced more fruits, larger fruits and prettier fruits. Gardeners liked its distinctive rind, which is orange with green splotches. Gardeners were pleased with the flavor of *Sweet Mama*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Speckled Hound</i>	63	79	7.53
<i>Sweet Mama</i>	37	68	7.63
			(22 sites)



### Squash, Winter Spaghetti

Both varieties germinated well and were healthy. *Primavera* received higher ratings in earliness, productivity, fruit appearance and flavor. *Pinnacle* received decent ratings but was overshadowed by the excellence of *Primavera*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Pinnacle</i>	20	63	7.13
<i>Primavera</i>	80	88	7.26
			(19 sites)



### Tomato, Determinate

Most gardeners preferred *Roadster*. Its vines produced quicker yields. *Roadster* fruits were more flavorful. The fruits of both varieties were beautiful and their overall yields were similar.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>BHN 589</i>	30	55	7.05
<i>Roadster</i>	70	65	7.30
			(24 sites)



### Tomato, Paste

*Granadero* produced much earlier and higher yields. Its fruits were better tasting to more gardeners. *Granadero* fruits were plump, oval, meaty (*Roma*-type) and large. *San Marzano* fruits were slimmer, flavorful and had a lower water content.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Granadero</i>	69	92	8.85
<i>San Marzano</i>	31	54	7.31
			(17 sites)



### Watermelon, Midsize

Both varieties produced tasty melons but *Sweet Dakota Rose* melons were especially sweet, flavorful and crisp. *Sweet Dakota Rose* produced earlier and more melons at more sites. *Estrella* produced large melons with a classic, oblong shape.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Estrella</i>	29	48	6.38
<i>Swt Dakota Rose</i>	71	78	7.51
			(48 sites)



### Sunflower, Bicolor

*Shock-O-Lat* germinated better, bloomed earlier and produced many more flowers. *Shock-O-Lat* flowers were larger and its stalks were taller and sturdier. *Shock-O-Lat* flowers were gorgeous and unique. *Ring of Fire* lacked vigor.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Ring of Fire</i>	38	54	6.04
<i>Shock-O-Lat</i>	62	81	7.50
			(30 sites)



### Sunflower, Gold

Most gardeners preferred *Golden Ray*. Its flowers were big and bright. The stalks of *Golden Ray* were taller and sturdier. *Gold Rush* has always done well in our trials. It bloomed earlier and produced more flowers than *Golden Ray*.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
<i>Gold Rush</i>	40	70	6.70
<i>Golden Ray</i>	60	80	7.70
			(11 sites)





### Sunflower, Bicolor Dwarf

Flowers came in warm shades of gold, copper and red. *Firecracker* bloomed earlier and more abundantly. *Firecracker* had stronger, taller stalks that withstood drought better. *Little Becca* had compact plants with cute, colorful flowers.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Firecracker	53	83	7.54
Little Becca	47	60	6.80
			(40 sites)



### Sunflower, Orange Dwarf

Several gardeners could not tell the varieties apart from one another. *Orange Hedge* flowers delighted the bees with its pollen. *Orange Hobbit* bloomed earlier at more sites. Its pollenless blooms were well suited for bouquets.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Orange Hedge	55	72	7.29
Orange Hobbit	45	69	7.09
			(36 sites)



### Sunflower, Yellow Dwarf

Both varieties produced pretty, lemon-yellow flowers. *Lemon Pixie* was strongly preferred. It bloomed much earlier and more prolifically. Its compact, 2-foot-tall plants were filled with flowers. *Lemon Cutie* featured semi-double flowers.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Lemon Cutie	17	63	6.75
Lemon Pixie	83	75	7.38
			(8 sites)



### Zinnia, Fruit Mixes

These mixes were easy to grow and gardeners loved them. They rated high in germination, health and flower qualities. Plants were sturdy and filled with large, colorful flowers. They attracted pollinators and were great as cut flowers.

Variety	Pref	Rec	Rating
Berry Tart	41	85	8.01
Fruity Beauty	59	87	8.30
			(118 sites)

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