Vegetables (cont.)

Wee-B-Little Pumpkin
*Cucurbita pepo*
This triumph of miniaturization impressed the 1999 AAS judges. Bred to please home and market gardeners and kids everywhere. Unribbed fruits are easier to decorate than Jack Be Little. Small vines (only 6–8’) produce 3–4 mini 8–12 oz fruits per plant. Fruits, more upright than Jack Be Little with darker orange rind, look just like tiny pie pumpkins and could serve as such. Sturdy dark green stems provide prickle-free handles. 90 days. Source: Fedco.

Caribe Cilantro
*Coriandrum sativum*
The best of the ten strains of cilantro in our trial. Received high marks from trialer Heron Breen as “hardworking with lots of excellent eating foliage and great flavor.” Longstanding; was barely beginning to flower on July 9. 55 days. Source: Patron 2016.

Fernleaf Dill
*Anethum graveolens*
1992 AAS. A dwarf variety suitable for small gardens or patio containers, Fernleaf grows only half as tall as other varieties and is very slow to go to seed. One September, most of our May abundant piquant foliage was still suitable for harvesting. Multi-branching plants spread 18–24”. 55 days. Source: Patron 2016.

Genovese Basil
*Ocimum basilicum*
The choice of many connoisseurs for making pesto. Also called Perfumed Basil. Leaves are slightly smaller and finer than Sweet Basil with more aroma and potency. 70 days. Source: Fedco.

Herbs

Flowers Useful and Decorative

Amaranth
*Tagetes erecta*
Large yellow and orange flowers on plants 2 to 3 ft high. Despite its name, it is native to Mexico and Central America, but naturalized in warm temperate areas all over the world. Plant with eastern exposure for best results. Self-seeding annual. 75-100 days. Source: Patron 2016

Purple Cone flower
*Echinacea purpurea*
2 ft. tall perennial with purple daisy-like flowers. Native to eastern North America. Has an established history of use as an herbal medicine. Echinacea is a hit with native pollinators, and great for rain gardens, too. May not bloom until second year. 90-100 days. Source: GCC Seed library.

Tangerine Gem Marigold
*Tagetes tenuifolia*
Compact 10–12” annual bears tiny deep orange flowers early, through summer, into fall. They make colorful tasty additions to salads. Also popular garden border plant for attracting beneficial insects and repelling some nematodes. 68 days. Source: Patron 2016.

Flowers (cont.)

Bright Lights Cosmos
*Cosmos sulphuratus*
Fast-growing 36” tall plants offer a profusion of vivid orange and yellow flowers from mid-summer until the first frost. Delicate, feathery green foliage. Attracts butterflies. 85 days. Source: GCC seed library.

Flashback Calendula
*Calendula officinalis*
A mix of orange, apricot and peachy doubled petals, all with red backing to create a distinctive contrast. Colors fade to bicolor yellows or yellow-peach, adding interest as the plants mature. Blooms withstand light fall frosts; still look good in October. Edible petals. Annual. 55 days. Source: Patron 2016.

Hopi Dye Sunflower
*Helianthus annuus*
Annual. A rare indigenous heirloom that the Hopis used as a natural dye source for coloring baskets purplish charcoal. “Blackest little seeds I’ve ever seen,” says trialer Donna Dyrek. They will stain your hands purple when you collect them. Also edible and extremely easy to hull. 8’ stalks with massive 12–18” main heads feature golden-yellow single petals around a dark purple-green center. Numerous side branches set all the way to the ground with smaller blossoms that make great cuts. Mound the soil around the base of the plants to prevent lodging. 90-100 days. Source: GCC seed library.

Morning Glory- Purple
*Ipomea purpurea*
Purple-colored trumpet-shaped flowers and hairy heart-shaped leaves on this vine native to Mexico and Central America. Unribbed fruits, more upright than Jack Be Little with darker orange rind, look just like tiny pie pumpkins and could serve as such. Sturdy dark green stems provide prickle-free handles. 90 days. Source: Paton 2016.

How to borrow seed from the GCC Seed Library:

You may select up to 10 seed packets from the seed library. Just bring your selections and your GCC library card up to the circulation desk. There are no due dates or fines, and you are not required to return seeds to the library.

If you have any questions or would like to share photos of or seed from what you have grown with the library, email us at: seedlibrary@gcc.mass.edu

If you’d like to sign up for our seed library email list, a sign-up sheet is available at the circulation desk.

The GCC Seed Library is located in the main area of the GCC library, next to the reference desk.

Please note that due to the nature of donated seeds, we can’t guarantee germination rates or that seeds will necessarily be true to parent plants. Seed descriptions from the FEDCO catalog.
Beans and Legumes

Chestnut Trail of Tears Bean (Heirloom)
(also known as Cherokee Black) Given to Seed Savers Exchange in 1977 by the late Dr. John Wyche, SSE member from Hugo, Oklahoma. Dr. Wyche’s Cherokee ancestors carried this bean over the Trail of Tears, the infamous winter death march from the Smoky Mts. to OK (1838-1839). Green 6” pods with purple overlay, shiny jet black seeds. Pole habit, snap or dry, 85 days. Source: GCC gardens 2016.

Kentucky Wonder Pole Bean
Also known as Old Homestead. Back in 1921, Stark Bros. opined, “Of all the climbing kinds, we do not believe there is a better one than Kentucky Wonder; it is an old variety with solid meaty pods, 7-9” long…and when cooked no bean is better. It is enormously productive, the pods hanging in great clusters from top to bottom of the pole.” The nutty flavor makes them outstanding for freezing. As the beans mature, the pods flatten. Pick regularly to maintain quality and production, as they get tough once the beans enlarge. A favorite since the mid-1800s, Wonder was given its present name by the eminent Marblehead, MA, seedsmen James J.H. Gregory in 1877. Brown seeds. 68 days. Source: Fedco Seeds.

Lina Sisco’s Bird Egg Bean (Heirloom)
Green shelling or dry bush bean. Family heirloom brought to Missouri by covered wagon in the 1880s by Lina’s grandmother. Lina Sisco was one of the six original members of Seed Savers Exchange, which was founded in 1975. Large tan bean with maroon markings. Horticultural type used as a dry bean. Bush habit, dry. 85 days. Source: GCC gardens 2016

Lincoln Shell Pea
With good shell pea varieties so hard to find, consider returning to this old English favorite that we still rate as the sweetest pea and the best for fresh garden grazing. First offered in America by J.M. Thorburn in 1908, the year before Dr. Wyche’s Cherokee ancestors carried this bean over the Trail of Tears, the infamous winter death march from the Smoky Mts. to OK (1838-1839). Green 6” pods with purple overlay, shiny jet black seeds. Pole habit, snap or dry, 85 days. Source: GCC gardens 2016.

Provider Bush Green Bean
Nothing provides like Provider. For highest early yields—even under adverse conditions—and rich beany taste, old reliable Provider can’t be beat. Also excellent for canning and “my choice for freezing and dilly beans,” says Elaine Carlson of Cape Porpoise, ME. Noted for its concentrated sets of round 5-5-1/2” pods. (continued next column)

Beans and Legumes (cont.)

Provider Bush Green Bean (cont.)
Anne Elder of Community Farm of Ann Arbor praises its amazing resilience: it and 225 Royal Burgundy re-flower repeatedly after heavy pickings followed by rains. Came in one day ahead of Contender for earliest in our observation plot. Our best-selling variety in the catalog year after year. 50 days. Source: Fedco.

Turkey Craw Bean (Heirloom)
Reportedly from the region of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Original seed said to have been found in a wild turkey’s craw. Stringless 6” pods enclose attractive brown seeds with tan flecks and brown eye rings. Used as a snap bean or a dry bean; excellent canned or frozen. Pole habit, snap or dry. 80-100 days Source: GCC gardens 2016.

Lettuce and Greens

Black Seeded Simpson Leaf Lettuce
The earliest and most popular looseleaf variety. “One of our absolute favorites for early season production with heads up to 16” diameter,” says New York State market lettuce grower Lisa Bloodnick. Large loose crumpled juicy light-green leaves slightly ruffled and blistered. Inner leaves tender and well blanched. Does not stand heat well; sow as early as the ground can be worked. Probably originally from England circa 1850, this heirloom was introduced by Peter Henderson & Co. of New York around 1875. Germination showed some tolerance to warm temperatures. 42 days. Source: Fedco.

Buttercrunch Butterhead Lettuce
Our trials evaluator calls it “the cucumber of lettuce, smooth and soothing with a green refreshing flavor.” A 1963 All-America selection developed by Dr. G.L. Raleigh at Cornell. Dark green outer leaves with creamy center heart. Bloodnick praises its “sweet, succulent broad mid-ribs.” Slow to bolt, but can be prone to bottom rot. Always our best-selling lettuce variety, annually exceeding 3,000 packets. Some ability to germinate in warm temperatures. 50 days. Source: Fedco.

Bright Lights Chard
Best seller from Johnny’s Selected Seeds racks up annual sales in excess of 5,000 packets. Bright Lights bathes stems, midribs and secondary veins in a panoply of gold, yellow, orange, pink, intermediate pastels and dazzling stripes. The tenderness of its dark green to bronze leaves and the mildness of its chart flavor impressed the AAS judges in 1998. Young seedlings respond to cut-and-come-again culture, ideal for mesclun. 56 days. Source: Johnny’s Seeds.

Forellenschluss Romaine Lettuce
Called by Bloodnick “the Jackson Pollack of lettuces.” Also known as Freckles or Trout Back, an heirloom from Arche Noah, the Austrian genetic preservation project. An absolutely gorgeous romaine with the delicate taste and texture of a butterhead, distinguished for its deep green leaves flecked with wine-red splodges. (continued next column)

Lettuce and Greens (cont.)

Forellenschluss Romaine Lettuce (cont.)
Lately we’ve seen increasing variation in the coloration and degree of splotchling. The best-tasting of the 50 lettuces in our 1998 trial. Very buttery tender leaves may be harvested at 4-6” for mesclun or allowed to grow full size for maximum ornamental benefit. William Woy’s Weaver traced Forellenschluss back to 1793; it was a dwarf variety of Spotted Aleppo developed in Germany. 56 days. Source: Fedco.

Other Vegetables and Fruits

Cosmonaut Volkov Tomato
Open-pollinated. A superb home-garden variety with good commercial potential both outdoors and in tunnels. Cosmonaut always tastes good, occasionally sublime. The best two tomatoes I’ve ever eaten were Cosmonauts from different gardens in different years. Usually ripens quantities of deep red slightly flattened 8-12” globes at the beginning of August when tomato craving is at its peak. Even in cold summers, it will produce dependably by mid-August. What makes Cosmonaut so special is its juice: sweet, rich and full-bodied. Volkov was the Russian explorer who fell through space. From Dnepropetrovsk in the Ukraine, brought to America by the Seed Savers Exchange. 65 days. Source: Seeds Savers Exchange.

Early Wonder Tall Top Beet
The beet that can’t be beat in our customers’ estimation. We sell more than 5,000 packets per year. Selected for earliness from Crosby’s Egyptian and introduced in 1911. Quick emergence in cold soil and attractive purple tops make Wonder the choice for early beet greens and bunching beets. Both home gardeners (scarfed up 3,458 size-A) and commercial growers (bought 160 1-pounders and 14 5-pounders) like Early Wonder. In their 1916 catalog F.H. Woodruff & Sons of Medford, CT, claimed to be the largest beet-seed growers in the U.S. and the originators of Early Wonder. 48 days. Source: Fedco.

Fargo Yellow Pear Cherry Tomato
Open-pollinated. Ind. Introduced 1934 by Oscar Will & Co. of Bismarck, ND, yet another of famous breeder A.F. Yaeger’s creations. He crossed Bison with Yellow Pear for earliness and higher yields. Each plant produces about three dozen sweet tasty 1 oz fruits. About twice the size of regular pear tomatoes, the meaty morsels are crack resistant. ICS, Stellar 82 days. Source: Fedco.

Marketmore 76 Slicing Cucumber
Dr. Henry Munger’s classic open-pollinated cucumber for the ages, long the leading slicing variety in the Northeast, still sells nearly 5,000 packets per year for us though it is offered by just about every seed purveyor on the planet. Dark green 8-8-1/2” fruits show good uniformity. Vines vigorous throughout season. 63 days. Source: Fedco.