Soybeans New Vegetable for Iowa Gardens

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SOYBEANS

New Vegetable for Iowa Gardens

A NEW early-fall green crop for the Iowa farm garden is the vegetable soybean—comparatively unknown to most Americans but for centuries a chief protein and fat food for Orientals.

Soybeans are as important to the Asiatics as cereals are to the Europeans and Americans, and the products that have been developed from them far outnumber the cereal products. Many of these soybean products such as salad oil from the refined soybean oil, margarines and hydrogenated fats, soybean flour and soy sauce have been used in quantities in this country, but as a vegetable the beans are new.

Green soybean varieties vary a great deal as to palatability. They may have a pleasingly rich sweet and nutty flavor or they may resemble peas or baby lima beans; they may be flat and tasteless, or they may have a disagreeable, strong, bitter or sickeningly sweet flavor. As the bean matures the undesirable flavors are more pronounced. In general, the beans that are light-colored in the mature stage are the more desirable; those that are darker in color are more difficult to cook and less desirable in flavor.

To select at random from the hundreds of available varieties of both vegetable and field soybeans those that are palatable would be like groping in the dark. Through experimental trials over a 4-year period (1935–39), the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station has tested 89 vegetable and 4 field types of soybeans. The characteristics which determine the acceptability of a variety of beans as a food are largely: Size, shape and color of bean; ease of shellling and cooking; texture, flavor and palatability of the cooked beans; ease of digestion and their nutritive value. Three vegetable varieties—Kanro, Jogun and Sac, in that order, were selected as the most desirable for human use at the green bean stage in Iowa.

Seed of only a few varieties of vegetable soybeans are available in Iowa. Kanro, probably the most suitable variety for Iowa, can be purchased from some of the leading Iowa seed firms. Vegetable soybeans need be planted at about the same time and in the same manner as snap beans—about the middle of May, after the danger of frost is past.

When seeds are planted on or about May 12, the period for picking at the green vegetable stage varies with each variety: For Sac, Aug. 15 to 26; for Kanro, Aug. 23 to Sept. 6, and for

Plant soybeans in your vegetable garden and enjoy them in fall menus.
To cook soybeans, cover with cold, salted water, 
bring to a boil and cook uncovered 12 minutes.

To be at their best in the
green vegetable stage, the beans
should not be picked before the
green pods are approximately
two-thirds full and the beans are
slightly soft or succulent nor af-
after the green pods reach maxi-

pleasing texture. As
beans mature they
become less waxy and
more mealy. Drain, if any liquid
remains, sea son
with salt and pep-
per, and serve hot.
Since beans are high
in fat content, little
or no butter is need-
ed. The green color
of the bean deepens on c o o k i n g ; t h e
weight and volume
increase slightly.

Green vegetable
soybeans can be
served in a variety
of ways. A good
way to begin using
them is to substi-
tute them for green
peas in r e c i p e s
using fresh peas.

F r e e z i n g has
been found to be an
excellent way to
lengthen the season
for fresh, g r e e n
vegetable soybeans.
Where cold storage
lockers are available this method
is to be recom-
mended. Pick the green beans
when at their optimum stage,
shell, then scald or blanch in
boiling water for 1 minute, and
cool quickly by dipping in pan of
cold water. This process as-
sists in preserving the color.
Pack in liquid-tight container
a n d store in cold storage
locker.

Preserving by canning has
proven satisfactory for green
vegetable soybeans. Beans can-
ned with 1 teaspoon of salt and
V
2 to 1 teaspoon of sugar per
pint scored higher than those
 canned with salt only. When
processed in water bath for 3
hours, the spoilage was less
than 1 percent; at 3 1/2 hours,
there was no spoilage. Spoilage
was small for beans canned in
the pressure cooker at 10
pounds pressure for 60 minutes.
There is less tendency for the
beans and liquid to turn a
brownish color in glass jars than
in tin or even enameled cans.

In using the canned product al-
ways boil for 5 minutes before
serving.

Only a limited number of ex-
periments have been reported on
the human tolerance for and
utilization of green vegetable
soybeans when fed over an ex-
tended period of time. Results
indicate that when taken in a
mixed diet they compare favor-
able in digestibility with other
foods.

Soybeans in the green and dry
stages are much higher in pro-
tein and fat than other legumes,
but lower in carbohydrates.
They also compare favorably in
calcium and iron content with
foods considered rich sources of
these elements. The iron con-
tent is in a class with that con-
tained in liver. Reports are con-
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