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2011 Home Demonstration Gardens

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2011 Home Demonstration Gardens

Abstract

Themes for the 2011 Home Demonstration Garden Field Days included 1) a storybook garden (vegetables and annual flowers named after characters in classic fairytales), 2) warty pumpkins, 3) new flowers and vegetables, 4) summer squash named after types of cats, 5) pole beans, and 6) sunflowers without pollen for use as cut flowers.

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Disciplines

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2011 Home Demonstration Gardens

RFR-A1143

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Introduction

Themes for the 2011 Home Demonstration Garden Field Days included 1) a storybook garden (vegetables and annual flowers named after characters in classic fairytales), 2) warty pumpkins, 3) new flowers and vegetables, 4) summer squash named after types of cats, 5) pole beans, and 6) sunflowers without pollen for use as cut flowers.

Materials and Methods

Seeds of some vegetable and annual flowers were sown in late February and March 2011 at the Armstrong Research Farm greenhouses in Lewis, Iowa. Approximately one month later seedlings were transplanted into cell packs. Plants were distributed to each research farm in early May for planting in mid- to late-May at each garden. Several taxa were directly seeded into the garden plots. Plants were hardened or acclimated to growing conditions at each farm for a week or more prior to planting. The ISU Research Farms participating in the 2011 Home Demonstration Garden trial and display included: Armstrong (Lewis), Horticulture Research Station (Ames), Muscatine Island (Fruitland), Northern (Kanawha), Northeast (Nashua), and the Lyon County Fairgrounds (Rock Rapids). Transplants were watered at planting and then as needed throughout the growing season. The amount of water and fertilizer applied at each garden varied considerably due to soil and weather conditions.

Results and Discussion

Many of the plants in the 2011 Home Demonstration Gardens performed well at all farms across the state. The warty pumpkins

(Goosebumps and Knucklehead) were vigorous and popular at each garden and field day. All cultivars of summer squash performed well at each garden (Table 1) with Green Tiger and Bobcat producing the highest total yield at the Armstrong Research Farm in Lewis, Iowa over a 2-week sampling period July 6–18. The newer cultivars of cucumbers (Table 1) and tomatoes (Bella Rosa, BHN-1021, Defiant PHR, and Red Deuce) were more variable depending on site. At sites where the cucumbers and tomatoes survived germination and transplanting, they were typically productive. Little evidence of blight was noticed on the blight resistant cultivar of tomato called Defiant PHR. Vigor and pod production of all cultivars (Fortex, Marvel of Venice, Painted Lady, Rattlesnake, Red Noodle, and Trionfo Violetta) of pole beans were variable depending on site as well. Sunflowers bloomed well at each research farm, although they were highly variable in height depending on location.

Data were collected from field day participants in 2011 via printed surveys at each research farm with the Home Demonstration Garden. One hundred forty-five completed surveys were collected from six field days. The majority of respondents to the survey were female (75%). The majority of respondents were either 55–70 years of age (41%) or over 70 years of age (30%). Approximately 29 percent of respondents were 41–55 years of age (16%), or 19–40 years of age (13%). Sixty two percent of respondents had attended a previous Home Demonstration Garden field day, averaging 4 to 5 years of attendance. Respondents traveled anywhere from less than 5 miles (10.3%), 5–15 miles (28.3%), 16–25 miles (24.1%), 26–50 miles (26.2%), or greater than 50 miles (11.7%). The majority of respondents found out about the field days from local newspaper

articles (51.0%), heard about the field day from friends (22.6%), through online newsletters, emails or websites (15.6%), or radio announcements (10%). The vast majority of the respondents said they would either consider (60%) planting or definitely planned to plant (37%) one or more of the

plants trialed in the Home Demonstration Garden in their home gardens next year.

Acknowledgements

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Table 1. Comparison of total yields (pounds) of different cultivars of cucumbers and summer squash grown at the Armstrong Research Farm in Lewis, Iowa in 2011.

		Number of fruit	Total weight (kg)	Average fruit size (kg)
Cucumber				
	Cucino	29	4.65	.16
	Puccini	17	2.04	.12
	Silor	6	1.08	.18
Summer Squash				
	Black Beard	9	4.90	.54
	Bobcat	26	10.29	.39
	Cheetah	12	3.12	.25
	Cougar	11	3.79	.34
	Felix	20	7.85	.39
	Green Tiger	30	13.29	.44
	Jaguar	23	8.82	.38
	Leopard	19	8.02	.42
	Lioness	12	4.22	.35
	Tigress	17	6.14	.36