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2015 Home Demonstration Garden

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Introduction

The 2015 Home Demonstration Garden showcased three themes, Garden of the Americas, brambles, and new annual flowers. The Garden of the Americas featured vegetables that originated from North and South America. Most farms hosted the Home and Demonstration Garden field day in September 2015. The public is invited to Home Demonstration Garden field days at each farm.

Materials and Methods

Seeds of some species (tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos, greens, and flowers) were sown in late February and March 2015 at the ISU Horticulture Greenhouses, Ames, Iowa. Three to four weeks later, seedlings were transplanted into cell packs so they could be distributed to each research farm in early May. Most research farms planted the gardens in mid-to-late-May. Sweet potato slips arrived in late May and were mailed directly to each farm for planting. Because the sweet potatoes arrived after some gardens were planted, one farm did not plant the slips. Seeds of corn, beans, squash, and pumpkin were sown directly into the garden plots. One farm chose not to sow corn seed because it would cross-pollinate and reduce the quality of neighboring corn varieties. The brambles (raspberries and blackberry) were planted as bare-root plants in 2014, allowing a year of establishment prior to harvest. Because these are primocane-fruiting or fall-bearing brambles, canes were removed at ground level in early spring.

Transplants were hardened or acclimated to growing conditions at each farm for approximately one to two weeks prior to planting. The ISU Research Farms participating in the 2015 Home Demonstration Garden trial and display included: Armstrong (Lewis, IA), Horticulture Research Station (Ames, IA), Muscatine Island (Fruitland, IA), Northern (Kanawha, IA), Northeast (Nashua, IA), and the Lyon County Fairgrounds (Rock Rapids, IA). Transplants were watered at planting and then as needed throughout the growing season. Plants were fertilized as needed based on growing conditions at each site.

Garden of the Americas. Vegetables from North or South America were chosen for this theme. Approximately half of the garden consisted of vegetables originating from North or South America. As part of the Three Sisters Garden, three cultivars of ornamental corn (Cherokee Long Ear, Mandan Bride, and Seneca Red Stalker), three cultivars of beans (Arikara Yellow, Hidatsa Red, and Hidatsa Shield), and five cultivars of squash (Arikara, Autumn Crown, Butterscotch, Lakota, and Speckled Pup) were grown at each garden. In addition, three cultivars of pumpkin (Apprentice, Blanco, and Cinderella's Carriage), two cultivars of potato (Peter Wilcox and Strawberry Paw), and five cultivars of sweet potato (Beauregard, Evangeline, Murasaki, O'Henry, and White Yam) were included in the Garden of the Americas. As part of the Salsa Garden, six cultivars of tomato (Big Brandy, Brandywine, Chef's Choice Orange, Chef's Choice Pink, Costoluta Genovese, and Genuwine), six cultivars of peppers (Abay, Bull Nose, Garfield, Hot Sunset, Sweet Sunset, and King of the North), and four cultivars of tomatillo (Amarylla, Purple, Rio Grande Verde, and Tamayo R) were grown in each garden as

well. Greens were the last addition to the Garden of the Americas and included two cultivars of mustard (Garnet Giant and Southern Giant Curled), two cultivars of collards (Champion and Flash), two cultivars of kalettes (Kaleidoscope and Snowdrop), and two cultivars of kale (Scarlet and Toscano).

Brambles. The bramble garden consisted of four cultivars of raspberry (Anne, Autumn Bliss, Caroline, and Heritage) and one blackberry (Prime Ark 45).

New flowers. Recent annual flower introductions were chosen for this section of the garden. Two cultivars of marigold (Zenith Lemon Yellow and Zenith Red), four cultivars of red petunias (Easy Wave Red Velour, Opera Supreme Red, Success Red, and Tidal Wave Red Velour), two cultivars of salvia (Amore Purple and Amore Scarlet), and four cultivars of zinnia (Macarenia, Mazurkia, Zinderella Lilac, and Zinderella Peach) were part of this garden.

Results and Discussion

General observations of the different cultivars of plants were taken at each site during September field days. No yield data were taken for any crop in 2015. All cultivars of corn, beans, and squash in the Three Sisters Garden performed well. The pole bean Hidatsa Shield Figure managed to climb the heirloom corn in half of the gardens. The squash and pumpkins were standouts in this garden. Most cultivars were highly productive. Although the heirloom squash cultivars Arikara and Lakota did not produce as many fruit per plant as the newer cultivars of squash, what was produced was large for each type.

Potatoes and sweet potato cultivars were productive at most gardens. The potatoes Peter Wilcox and Strawberry Paw were harvested at most field days, however, the sweet potatoes were still relatively small at most farms.

In the Salsa Garden, all tomatoes, peppers, and tomatillos were productive. The standout tomato was Chef's Choice Orange, which produced large quantities of high-quality tomatoes. Although all peppers produced large attractive fruit, the All-American Selections Hot Sunset (hot banana-type) and Sweet Sunset (sweet banana-type) were especially productive and attractive in the gardens. Most of the tomatillos were highly productive, with Tamayo R producing much larger fruit compared with other cultivars.

As expected, the greens were more variable. At the time of the field days, the mustard greens were bolting, and the collards were still productive. The kalettes were small compared with the kale cultivars Scarlet and Toscano, which were in good condition at most farm field days.

All raspberry cultivars were producing harvestable fruit on the dates of the field days. The blackberry cultivar Prime Ark 45 was still flowering or ripening immature fruits at several farms in September.

All flower cultivars produced attractive displays for field days. The petunias Easy Wave Red Velour and Tidal Wave Red Velour were exceptionally vigorous at most gardens.

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