



Victory Gardens 2.0

During the First and Second World Wars, vegetable gardens filled many yards. In 1943, 20 million gardeners produced 8 million tons of food in the United States. Today we are enthusiastically planting backyard gardens again. We grow food not only to provide us with fresh, often novel, varieties of organic fruits and vegetables, but to reduce the transportation miles associated with the food we eat.

Our own Sharon Hanna (www.growsomefood.ca) and Mike Nassichuk (www.mountainsidegardening.ca) teach people to grow food in the city. They have kindly sent along lists of favourite vegetable varieties.

Squash: Compact varieties: Make sure seedlings for squash and cucumbers (all cucurbits) are transplanted to the garden before the third true leaf opens.

Carrots: 'Bolero', other 'Nantes' varieties. "I don't care for the soapy taste of purple or yellow ones, but...I could be wrong!"

Lettuce and mesclun mixes: For scissor-harvesting.

Corn: "Corn is great to grow. It is one of the most attractive to bees and other pollinators. Even if you don't get actual corn to eat, it's a lovely architectural feature so grow half a dozen plants for the bees."

Potatoes: 'Yukon Gold', 'Desiree'. "Try the burlap sack method." Email me at growsomefood@telus.net for details.

Beans: Purple bush beans outperform any others but not everyone likes the idea of purple beans (they turn green when cooked). Romano-types like 'Goldmarie' are great. Scarlet Runners are wonderful to eat (small) and blossoms attract bees. Plant Scarlet Runners and black-seeded varieties in early May in raised beds. Plant other beans, or in level ground, in late May when soil reaches 55 degrees.

"The latest research indicates that using of dolomite lime acts to compact soil. Using plenty of compost should maintain a healthy pH. Use calcium carbonate from oyster shells only if a soil test shows low pH."

Tomatoes: 'Sungold F1' (you can't save seed, too bad), 'Black Cherry', 'Green Grape'. "You actually get tomatoes", Sharon says, adding: "Larger fruiting varieties are harder in Metro Vancouver due to lack of light in many home gardens. I'm trying a new Sungold-like OP tomato so stay tuned."

"Try to attend Seedy Saturdays at VanDusen. This year attendance was quadruple the normal. Seedy Saturday features locally grown seeds, many of which will be suited to our west coast climate. Seed supply companies, including West Coast Seeds, do not grow their own seeds but buy from major seed suppliers all over the world."

—Sharon Hanna



Bean (bush): 'Bush Blue Lake', 'Provider', 'Royal Burgundy'

Bean (pole): 'Blue Lake', 'Kentucky Wonder'

Beet: 'Red Ace', 'Chioggia'

Broccoli: 'Goliath', 'Purple Sprouting' (for overwintering)

Carrot: 'Purple Haze', 'Sugarsnax', 'Scarlet Nantes', 'Flyaway' (partial rust fly resistance)

Corn: 'Extra Early Super Sweet', 'Seneca Spring'

Cucumber: 'Marketmore', 'Sweet Slice', 'Pioneer'

Lettuce: 'Buttercrunch', 'Red Salad Bowl', 'Red Sails', 'Freckles', 'Pandro'

Onions (storage): 'Copra', 'Red Baron', 'Walla Walla' (overwintering)

Peas: 'Green Arrow', 'Mister Big', 'Sugar Lace'

Potato: 'Yukon Gold', 'Kennebec'

Radish: 'French Breakfast', 'Cherry Belle', 'Easter Egg'

Salad Greens: Mizuna, Corn Salad, Mibuna, Red Mustard

Spinach: 'Olympia', 'Tye', 'Longstanding Bloomsdale'

Tomato: 'Ultra Sweet', 'Fantastic', 'Lemon Boy', 'Sweet

"In presenting a list such as this I also like to make reference to this Seeds of Diversity website — www.seeds.ca/hpd/catCSCI_specieslist.php— there one can find sources of a wide variety of vegetables. Another good website is www.gardenlist.com—a comprehensive inventory of gardening catalogues in the United States and in Canada."

—Mike Nassichuk

