

## HORTICULTURE

# Plant Something New

**This year's best gardens will include along with old favorites a few new vegetable varieties and also endive, broccoli or some other vegetable not previously planted.**

By **MARTHA G. MORROW**

► **THE BEST HOME** gardens this year will include a few of the new vegetable varieties along with the old favorites.

Radishes, beets and peppers will be pretty much the same old stand-bys; some of the beans, tomatoes, onions, and squash will be recent developments. In addition, many back-yard and vacant-lot gardens will have a vegetable or two not previously planted, such as endive, broccoli and kohlrabi.

New vegetable varieties for your garden are constantly being developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, state research stations and commercial seedsmen. Sometimes these are noteworthy because of their overall high quality or high productivity—these you will want to try. Sometimes they are tailor-made to lick some particular disease, or to grow specially well in certain climates or in certain soils—consider local conditions before planting these.

Here is an up-to-date report of what vegetable breeders have developed for your garden and what they are working on to give you even better vegetables. But new varieties can not be created overnight and many of the old favorites are still the best.

## Tomatoes in Every Garden

**TOMATOES** will be grown in almost every garden, be it large or small, in every state of the union. A number of good wilt-resistant varieties have been introduced within the past several years. Among the newest of these is the golden-yellow Sunray which became commercially available a year or two ago. The red-fruited Pan American gave Sunray its wilt-resistance, Jubilee is responsible for its yellow color.

Over most of the eastern United States, Rutgers, Marglobe and Pritchard are well-established, wilt-resistant varieties. On the Pacific Coast, particularly in California, Pearson is usually preferred.

In the cooler districts where the season is short, early, quick-growing varieties like Bounty and Victor are good. Plant them in other areas for a few early fruits, devoting up to a third of your tomato plot to them. Or if your garden is shaded part of the day by your house or trees, try these instead of the larger varieties. Stokesdale is a good second-early variety.

Several tomato breeders throughout the past decade have concentrated on licking such leaf diseases as curly-top, early blight, late blight and gray leaf spot. Wild species, worthless as tomatoes have been crossed

with familiar garden varieties in the hope of producing a plant that combines resistance with the customary large, firm fruit, but progress is slow and difficult.

**ONIONS** are sensitive to weather, length of day, insects and disease, yet nearly every gardener tries to raise them. The greatest boon to onion growers is the recent working out of basic breeding principles, that make hybrid varieties practical.

By next year substantial quantities of first generation hybrid onion seed of many varieties suited to growth in different parts of the country will be available; this year only modest quantities of hybrid onion seed are on the market. Hybrid onions offer many of the same advantages as hybrid corn, now almost universally preferred.

## Most Profitable

**SNAP BEANS** are among the most profitable crops that can be grown in the small garden, being generally quite productive at one or more seasons of the year. Two excellent varieties have been introduced in the past two years. Pods of Contender stand up better than those of Topcrop after harvest, so this variety is more popular for market. Topcrop, one of last year's All-America Selections, is mosaic resistant, productive, very tender and fleshy. But it makes its crop nearly all at once, so is best grown by those who freeze or can their own vegetables.

Resistance to blight, anthracnose, and virus diseases such as curly top are difficult objectives that experts who design new bean plants are trying to attain.

**LIMA BEANS**, an old garden favorite, are constantly being remodeled. Fordhook 242 and Early Market, introduced not many years ago, are of high quality and have large seeds. Peerless is a rather new small-seeded variety of high quality.

No resistance to specific diseases or pests has been bred into lima varieties now available, so bean breeders are trying to lick the mildew problem, bad in the East, and nematodes, a curse in the South and West. Every available variety at all closely kin to a lima bean is being tested. Some resistance has turned up, but to date no good disease-resistant variety has been announced.

**CABBAGE** should be included in all gardens except the very smallest, but plant only a few each of early, medium and late varieties to enjoy cabbage over a period of weeks. Golden Acre is an excellent early round cabbage for spring transplanting.

Copenhagen Market and Glory, later varieties, should be planted in the spring. A fine mid-season variety is All Seasons, and in the North—where cabbage is grown for storage—Danish Ballhead is good.

For the last three decades agricultural experts have been hard at work developing disease-resistant counterparts of these cabbages. So today seedsmen offer Marion Market for early planting, the round Globe for second-early and somewhat flattened Wisconsin All Seasons for midseason use in areas where cabbage yellows tends to spoil the crop.

**SPROUTING BROCCOLI**, a comparatively new crop to American home gardens, is relatively easy to grow except during the hot summer months in the warmer parts of the country. Grown pretty much like cabbage, it is hardy to frost. Calabrese and several other strains of the Italian Green Sprouting type are universally good.

**KOHLRABI**, another member of the cabbage family, is also easy to grow in the spring and withstands cool weather well. Its edible part is the swollen, turnip-like stem. Early White Vienna is the principal variety, but don't plant too much at once—a row 15 to 20 feet long is all most families will want before it gets too old.

**CUCUMBERS** are universally popular, but have little food value and take up too much space in very small gardens. The white spined or slicing kind, such as you would grow in your garden, has been greatly improved in recent years.

Stays Green (also called Black Diamond), Early Fortune and Straight Eight are good, standard varieties. Be sure to let them get large enough, and harvest every two or three days to prevent the fruits becoming too old and to keep the plant producing. Some good hybrids, valuable because of their high productivity and vigorous growth, have been introduced by seedsmen within the last few years.

## Bush Squash for Small Plot

**BUSH SQUASH** may be grown to advantage in small gardens. Soil and climatic requirements are the same as for cucumbers. Old favorites are various strains of yellow summer Straightneck, Cocozelle and White Bush Scallop. Uconn Squash, introduced last year, combines the fruit shape of Table Queen, a trailing squash, with the advantages of the bush habit of growth. Try it in your garden this summer.

**SPINACH**, though widely grown, is sensitive to heat and soil acidity. If the climate is mild enough for spinach to be carried over the winter (Baltimore south on the East coast), grow one of the mosaic-resistant strains like Virginia Savoy and Old



**HYBRID ONIONS**—Are available commercially this year because the basic breeding principles that make hybrid varieties practical were worked out by Dr. H. A. Jones of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, shown here putting into a cloth bag the flower heads of the two onion plants to be crossed.

Dominion. For spring planting, sow one of the Bloomsdale strains like Long-Standing Bloomsdale.

**LEAF LETTUCE** is a much safer bet than head lettuce. Slobolt is the most tolerant of the leaf lettuces to warm weather, although Grand Rapids and Black Seed Simpson grow well in many regions.

Most of the lettuce research today is being conducted on head lettuce in an attempt to give it resistance to heat, keep the heads firm and overcome tip burn. But just as Slobolt, an improved leaf lettuce, was a by-product of research on head lettuce, so will other desired characteristics be incorporated into leaf lettuce before head lettuce in many parts of the country can be recommended for any but the expert gardener.

**ENDIVE** is good as a fall salad plant for areas too warm for summer sowing of lettuce. A few dozen plants will keep a family well supplied with raw green stuff for weeks in the fall. It is grown in the south mainly as a fall and winter crop; in the north it can be grown throughout the summer and fall. Most popular of the broad-leaved kinds, often called escarole, are Broad Leaved Batavian and Full Heart Batavian; a good narrow, cut-leaved kind is Green Curled.

**BEETS** remain much the same year after year, but they are always good. Slightly

flattened or globular varieties are the most popular, Crosby Egyptian and Detroit Dark Red being reliable stand-bys.

Garden beets are generally damaged little by insects and disease. But in the intermountain sections they are attacked by a virus disease called curly top, carried by a leaf-hopper.

To date no curly-top resistant garden beets are available. But they are on the way, though probably still many years distant.

**PEPPERS**, although not a major article of food, are included in many gardens. A dozen or so plants is often sufficient. World-beater, California Wonder and Ruby King can be grown throughout most of the country. In the cooler districts such early varieties as Windsor A and Early Giant are good.

**SPRING RADISHES** are appetizing tidbits, but should be sown at intervals of a week to ten days, only a few feet in the row being planted each time. Ready for use quicker than other vegetables (they require but three to four weeks to mature), they remain edible only a short time. Scarlet Globe, Sparkler and Scarlet Turnip are popular small, round radishes.

**SWEETCORN**, most of which grown today is hybrid, **SWEET** and **IRISH POTATOES**, and **WINTER SQUASH** are grown only in the larger of the home gar-

dens. If the plot is 30 by 50 feet or less these vegetables would probably take up too much room.

*Seed of a cucumber, excellent of its type, and a hybrid cucumber of high productivity and vigorous growth have been collected for you by Science Service so you can see for yourself how plant breeders improve upon familiar garden varieties. Likewise seed of a lovely marigold and of the Glitters Marigold, one of this year's All-America Selections, have been secured so you can see for yourself just how these are remodeled. For the nominal fee of 50 cents you can receive packets of seeds of two cucumber varieties and two marigold varieties along with full details about how to grow them. Just write Science Service, 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for the kit on 1951 Seeds.*

Science News Letter, March 24, 1951

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