

## Organic Variety Trials Featured at Organic Field Day

Dr. Erin Silva, Organic Production Specialist, Univ. of Wisconsin, described her work on “The Organic Seed Partnership” during the University of Minnesota’s Organic Field Day, held July 11, 2007, at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center. Dr. Silva also gave a presentation on “Variety Selection and UW Organic Research” during the event.



The Organic Seed Partnership (OSP) is a multi-state, multi-regional project with several goals:

- To provide a wide array of improved crop varieties to organic growers;
- To enhance the capacity of organic growers to select and/or breed their own vegetable varieties and to organically produce commercial grade seed lots;
- To expand trialing and outreach networks on certified organic ground, consisting of regional hubs, supporting farm-based vegetable variety evaluation and selection activities; and
- To enhance classroom-based curricula for research supporting organic agriculture and to engage students and the public in research, production, and outreach activities.

In 2007, several trialing sites have been established in Wisconsin and Minnesota - on University farms, including the SWROC, and on commercial organic vegetable farms.

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This project is an extension of an USDA-funded initiative called “The Organic Seed Partnership”. This multi-state, multi-regional project has several goals:

- To provide a wide array of improved crop varieties to organic growers through seed catalogs and non-profit groups that distribute seed
- To enhance the capacity of organic growers to select and/or breed their own vegetable varieties and to produce commercial grade seed lots of existing varieties organically
- To expand trialing and outreach networks on certified organic ground, consisting of regional hubs, supporting farm-based vegetable variety evaluation and selection activities
- To enhance classroom-based curricula for research supporting organic agriculture and to engage students and the public in research, production, and outreach activities.

In 2007, we have extended goal #3 to the upper Midwest, establishing several trialing sites (both replicated on University farms and on commercial organic vegetable farms) in both Wisconsin and Minnesota.



The crops that we are trialing were chosen with grower input as to which varieties needed improved varieties: nice, round beets; Nantes-type carrots that are early to emerge and establish a good canopy to compete with weeds; straight, thin-skinned cucumbers; small, early cantaloupe melons; high-yielding edamame (edible soybeans); and thin, fancy French-style green beans. Of course, flavor is key to all these selections.

Some preliminary notes from MN:

- Pelleted carrot seed had poor emergence at all sites ('Nelson' and 'Nantes sel Taurus' varieties)
- 'Scarlet Nantes' carrot is emerging well with a nice canopy, but is known to be not quite as flavorful as some other varieties
- 'Early Wonder Tall Top' beet is emerging well with nice canopy closure
- 'Grenoble' beans are establishing nice, big plants
- 'Tavera' beans are a bit slower to establish
- 'Butterbeans' has the best emergence of the edamame varieties, followed by 'White Lion' – 'Lucky Lion' had poor emergence
- Most of the cucumber varieties had poor emergence when direct seeded, with the exception of 'Dasher II'
- Most of the melons had poor emergence when direct seeded, with the exception of 'Pulsar' and 'Jenny Lind'



## **Varieties planted at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center:**

### **Beans (source of seed)**

Grenoble – Johnny’s  
Tavera – High Mowing  
Maxibel – High Mowing  
Jade – Johnny’s  
Provider – Snow Seeds

### **Edamame**

Butterbeans – Johnny’s  
Lucky Lion – Snow Seeds  
White Lion – Snow Seeds

### **Melon**

Blenhien – High Mowing  
Pulsar – Snow Seeds  
Jenny Lind – Snow Seeds  
Swan Lake – Snow Seeds  
Arava – Snow Seeds

### **Beets**

Golden Detroit – High Mowing  
Early Wonder Tall Top– High Mowing  
Moneta – Johnnys  
Merlin – Johnnys  
Golden Beet – Snow Seeds  
Ruby Queen – Snow Seeds

### **Cucumbers**

Straight 8 – High Mowing  
Dasher II – Snow Seeds  
General Lee – Harris  
Marketmore – Harris  
Poinsett – Turtle Tree

### **Carrots**

Napoli - High Mowing  
Yaya – High Mowing  
Scarlet Nantes – High Mowing  
Nelson – Johnnys  
Hercules – Johnnys  
Vintana – Johnnys  
Purple Haze – Turtle Tree  
Nantes sel Taurus – Snow Seed