Cornell Cooperative Extension | Cornell Vegetable Program

# VEGEdge

YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR RESEARCH-BASED KNOWLEDGE

Volume 21 • Issue 22 • December 3, 2025



## 24 Years in the Making! New Heat Tolerant Broccoli Variety 'Northstar' Available Now Thanks to Cornell-Led Eastern Broccoli Project

*Christy Hoepting, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program (adapted from press release written by Erin Rodger, Communications at Cornell Agri-Tech)*

### Northeast Tough Climate for Quality Broccoli

Broccoli typically likes moderate growing conditions with cool nights, unlike the unpredictable conditions and hot nights that occur in the Northeast including New York. In this climate, the broccoli varieties that were developed for their ideal conditions (such as in the Salinas Valley in California) fail to produce quality heads here. Instead, broccoli heads have inner leaves, loose heads, brown and yellow beads and cat eyes – ugly and unmarketable! That is where the USDA-funded multi-year, multi-disciplinary, multi-state, and multi-million-dollar Eastern Broccoli Project (completed in 2022) comes in. This project was led by Thomas Bjorkman, Horticulturist at Cornell, and included Cornell Plant Breeder, Phil Griffith and CCE Extension Educator, Christy Hoepting. The goal of the project was to expand the broccoli industry in the Eastern U.S., which included developing heat-tolerant varieties. The team spent months evaluating hundreds of broccoli lines/varieties over the 10-year duration of the project.

### New Heat Tolerant 'Northstar' Broccoli Variety Gets a "Thumbs Up" Review from Kludts, Largest Broccoli Grower in NYS

According to Jay Collier, Vegetable Crop Manager for Kludt Brothers Farms in Kendall, NY, their test crop of Northstar (Fig. 1) held up, even in the exceptionally hot and dry year growing season of 2025, and Northstar's longer stem (Fig. 2) makes it easier to harvest and produces a higher-grade bunch. He also said he hasn't seen any hollow stems, a defect that makes

Figure 1. New heat-tolerant broccoli variety, 'Northstar' produces quality heads even under the tough hot and dry conditions of the 2025 growing season. *Photo: T. Bjorkman, Cornell*

*continued on page 3*

## About VegEdge

VegEdge newsletter is exclusively for enrollees in the Cornell Vegetable Program, a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and CCE Associations in 14 counties.

The newsletter is a service to our enrollees and is intended for educational purposes, strengthening the relationship between our enrollees, the Cornell Vegetable Program team, and Cornell University.

We're interested in your comments. Contact us at:
CCE Cornell Vegetable Program
480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14224
Email: cce-cvp@cornell.edu
Web address: cvp.cce.cornell.edu

**Contributing Writers**
Elizabeth Buck
Robert Hadad
Christy Hoepting
Margie Lund
Julie Kikkert
Lori Koenick
Judson Reid

**Publishing Specialist/Distribution/Sponsors**
Angela Ochterski

VegEdge is published 20+ times per year, parallel to the production schedule of western New York commercial vegetable growers. Enrollees in the Cornell Vegetable Program receive a complimentary electronic subscription to the newsletter. Print copies are available for an additional fee. You must be enrolled in the Cornell Vegetable Program to subscribe to the newsletter. For information about enrolling in our program, visit CVP.CCE.CORNELL.EDU. Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, Cornell faculty, and other states' Extension personnel may request to receive a complimentary electronic subscription to VegEdge by emailing Angela Ochterski at aep63@cornell.edu. Total readership varies but averages 700 readers.



**Help us serve you better by telling us what you think. Email us at *cce-cvp@cornell.edu* or write to us at Cornell Vegetable Program, 480 N Main St, Canandaigua, NY 14424.**

# Contents



**The next issue of VegEdge will be produced on January 7, 2026.**

## Feeding New York – Venison Donation

*Keith Tidball, Cornell*

Each year, DEC partners with Feeding New York State to facilitate the donation of 50-70,000 pounds of venison from deer harvested by hunters to those in need.

To help join the fight against hunger by donating your deer harvest:

1. Drop off any legally harvested, tagged, and reported deer at one of Feeding New York State's participating deer processors.
2. Call the processor ahead of time to ensure they can accept your deer.
3. Complete the processor's log sheet indicating your desire to donate the deer.

DEC and Feeding New York State will cover the processing costs for donated deer so that the venison can be distributed to food pantries and food banks throughout the state; however, funding is limited. If you don't have a deer to donate but still want to help, consider making a financial donation to the venison donation program through Feeding New York State, by clicking the "Donations" link at the top of the DEC Automated Licensing System page, or when you purchase your next hunting license. Learn more: Feeding New York State Venison Donation Program.

## 2025 Berry Prices Survey Released

*Kris Park, Cornell*

The Cornell 2025 Berry Prices Survey provides valuable information about the 2025 berry season. The survey provides statewide berry prices and trends to berry growers so you can better manage your business. Results will be released spring 2026 before pricing for the season. Growers can complete the Berry Survey online at https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJcxOUAnq4Kjudw.

All responses are confidential and only aggregated results are used.

If you have any questions, or would like a paper copy of the survey, please contact Kris Park at ksp3@cornell.edu, 607-255-7215.

*continued from page 1*

broccoli unmarketable. He plans to plant it again next year, possibly on a larger scale. Kludts grow 700 acres of broccoli in Orleans Co. and trialed several broccoli varieties on their farm as part of the Eastern Broccoli Project.

'Northstar' was born from unique public-private collaboration As part of the Eastern Broccoli Project, public (Phil Griffith at Cornell) and private (Cees Sintenie at global seed company Bejo Zaden) broccoli breeders teamed up to develop 'Northstar'. Cornell contributed a parent that focused on environmental resilience and Bejo contributed a parent that focused on commercial quality. After spending 12 years selecting genetics that allowed normal development despite warm nights, Phil Griffiths shared his broccoli parent with Bejo in 2012. And then Bejo worked for another 12 years to identify the promising combination 'Northstar'. It is expected that Northstar will benefit the Northeast, the East Coast and beyond.

Figure 2. Northstar's longer stem makes it easier to harvest. Its development was the result of a unique collaboration between public (Phil Griffith at Cornell) and public (Cees Sintenie at Bejo Zaden) breeders via the Cornell-led (Thomas Bjorkman) Eastern Broccoli Project. *Photo: T. Bjorkman, Cornell*

### 'Northstar' Seeds are Available

Seeds are available for conventional production (organic may follow if it takes off) through Bejo's dealer network (e.g. Seedway) and are accessible to growers across the Northeast and beyond who are eager to meet regional demand with a resilient, high-quality crop.

## More On Cleaning Food Contact Surfaces – Detergents

*Robert Hadad, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell Vegetable Program*

Not very many people follow food safety news articles except Extension educators like me. A lot more attention is being paid on problems with contamination. Listeria is one due to it being able to survive in wash/pack areas and storage partly because it requires effort to get rid of it. The question produce growers face is "How do you effectively clean food contact surfaces?" Have good tools. Use a detergent. Follow up with a sanitizer. I know what you're saying: "wait, what? Detergents? Aren't sanitizers enough?" No, they aren't.

Let's think of it this way. When washing dishes, do you just rinse them under water? Or do you rinse, scrub with a detergent, rinse again, then dry? A detergent helps lift of stuck on vegetative material and removes vegetable oils. Some vegetables have more oils than others. If a conveyor belt, washer, or other contact surface doesn't get cleaned often enough, oils can build up. An example would be peppers. More so with colored peppers.

Not all detergents are created equally. What you should use for cleaning tools, harvest bins, table surfaces, dunk tanks, sinks, and wash equipment, is a product that is unscented and free from dyes. The reason for "free and clear" type of products is in case the final rinsing doesn't get all the soap off. It also would be nice to use a product that is "low suds". A lot of suds make it harder to remove the residual soap. No one likes cleaning so the longer it takes the less workers (or yourself) will want to do it and do it right. Products can be found in grocery stores, building material box stores, and some of the supply catalogs and online sites. If you are not sure if a product covers what you need, contact the manufacturer.

If you are adhering to the FSMA produce safety regulations, three sections pertain to cleaning:

> §112.116(b) [food packaging]: If you reuse food-packing material, you must take adequate steps to ensure that food contact surfaces are clean, such as by cleaning food-packing containers or using a clean liner.
>
> §112.123(d)1 [equipment and tools]: You must inspect, maintain, and clean and, when necessary and appropriate, sanitize all food contact surfaces of equipment and tools used in covered activities as frequently as reasonably necessary to protect against contamination of covered produce.
>
> §112.123(d)2 [equipment and tools]: You must maintain and clean all non-food-contact surfaces of equipment and tools subject to this subpart used during harvesting, packing, and holding as frequently as reasonably necessary to protect against contamination of covered produce.

Remember, the detergents you want to use are dish and kitchen types, NOT LAUNDRY detergent. A little goes a long way.

The USDA National Organic Program allows for the use of detergents not OMRI approved but growers need to list the brands being used and they must rinse off the products thoroughly.

For more information on cleaning and sanitizing, wash/pack facility issues, the soon-to-be required agricultural water self-assessments, AND the forthcoming traceability requirements, contact Robert Hadad, 585-739-4065, rgh26@cornell.edu and other Extension specialists and educators across the state. We are available for calls, Zoom conversations, or in-person farm visits to go over all your food safety issues.

# 2025 Cornell "Hyloom" Tomato Variety Trial

*Greg Vogel, Assistant Professor, Plant Breeding and Genetics, School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University*

There isn't a single official definition of an "heirloom" tomato, but the term is generally used for varieties that meet two criteria: they are open-pollinated (not hybrids, so they will grow true-to-type from saved seed), and they have been grown for many years, often passed down through families and communities. Interest in heirloom tomatoes has grown alongside the farm-to-table movement, which increased demand for unique and traditional vegetable varieties. As a result, heirlooms are now a common market class. In a survey we conducted of New York tomato growers in 2023, 73% of respondents reported growing heirloom varieties as a proportion of their total tomato production.

However, heirloom tomatoes can be challenging to grow, especially in the open field. These varieties are prone to cracking, catfacing, and other defects, have soft fruit that do not store or transport well, and lack the disease resistances that are common in modern hybrids. To address these limitations, plant breeders and seed companies in recent years have developed an increasing number of what are sometimes referred to as "hyloom" varieties ("hybrid" + "heirloom"). These varieties aim to combine heirloom flavor and appearance with the productivity traits of modern hybrids.

## Trial Methods

We evaluated 16 hyloom varieties and 3 common heirloom comparison varieties (Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, and Striped German) in a field trial at Cornell's vegetable research farm in Freeville, NY. All the varieties are currently commercially available from various seed companies except for pre-commercial entries 9L08 and 21P09 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Varieties included in the trial and their attributes**

| Variety | Bred by | Growth Habit | Color | Disease Resistances[1,2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9L08 | A.P. Whaley | Indeterminate | Striped bicolor yellow/red | F races 1-2, FOR, LM races A-E, ToMV, V |
| 21P09 | A.P. Whaley | Indeterminate | Striped bicolor yellow/red | F races 1-2, FOR, GLS, LB, LM races A-E, ToMV, TSWV, V |
| Pink Delicious | Bayer | Indeterminate | Pink | High: GLS, ToMV Races 0-2, V |
| Lemon Boy Plus | Bayer | Indeterminate | Yellow | High: AS, F races 1-3, FOR, GLS, LM races B and D, ToMV Races 0-2, TTV, V. Intermediate: N |
| Purple Boy | Bayer | Indeterminate | Purple | High: F races 1-3, FOR, ToMV Races 0-2, V. Intermediate: N |
| Mountain Rouge | Bejo Seeds | Indeterminate | Pink | High: F race 1, GLS, N, V. Intermediate: LB |
| Black Angel | Earthwork Seeds | Determinate | Black | High: AS, F races 1-3, FOR, ToMV, GLS, V. Intermediate: N, LB, TSWV, TYLCV |
| Contessa | Earthwork Seeds | Indeterminate | Red | High: AS, F races 1-3, FOR, ToMV, GLS, V. Intermediate: LB, LM races A-E, PM, TSWV, TYLCV |
| Harvest Moon | Johnny's Selected Seeds | Indeterminate | Bicolor yellow/red | High: LB |
| Woodstock | Johnny's Selected Seeds | Indeterminate | Bicolor green/red | High: AS, F race 1, LB |
| Marmalade Skies | Johnny's Selected Seeds | Indeterminate | Orange | High: LB |
| Strawberry Fields | Johnny's Selected Seeds | Indeterminate | Pink | High: LB, N |
| Abigail | Johnny's Selected Seeds | Indeterminate | Pink | High: LB |
| WonderStar Red | PanAmerican Seed | Determinate | Red | High: F race 1, LB, SLS, V |
| WonderStar Pink | PanAmerican Seed | Determinate | Pink | Intermediate: F race 1, LB, SLS, V |
| BlushingStar | PanAmerican Seed | Indeterminate | Pink | High: LB, SLS |
| Brandywine Pink | Heirloom | Indeterminate | Pink | None |
| Cherokee Purple | Heirloom | Indeterminate | Purple | None |
| Striped German | Heirloom | Indeterminate | Bicolor yellow/red | None |

1 **Disease resistance codes: AS:** Alternaria stem canker. **F:** Fusarium wilt. **FOR:** Fusarium crown and root rot. **GLS:** Gray leaf spot. **LB:** Late blight. **LM:** Tomato leaf mold. **N:** Root knot nematode. **PM:** Powdery mildew. **SLS:** Septoria leaf spot. **ToMV:** Tomato mosaic virus. **TYLCV:** Tomato yellow leaf curl virus. **TSWV:** Tomato spotted wilt virus. **V:** Verticillium wilt.

2 Disease resistance information provided by breeders or seed company representatives.

*continued on page 5*

*continued from page 4*

The trial was transplanted 6/9/25 into raised beds with drip irrigation. Suckers were pruned up to the sucker before the first flower cluster and plants were supported using a stake-and-weave trellis between 6' wooden stakes. Plants were grown in five-plant plots with 24" of in-row spacing and each variety was replicated three times in the field. The trial was sprayed using a conventional calendar-based protectant fungicide program. Fruit were harvested at or beyond the breaker stage once per week for five weeks 8/11 through 9/8. Fruit were graded into #1 and non-#1 fruit based on the presence of cracking, blossom end rot, yellow shoulder, severe catfacing, and severe zippering. Brix, a measurement of sweetness, was measured on three fruit per plot at the fourth harvest point. Subjective flavor ratings, on a scale of 0-10 (with 10 the highest) were assigned by 16 participants attending a field day on 8/20.

## Trial Results

There were significant differences between varieties for all traits evaluated, except for Brix (Table 2). Notably, all 16 of the hyloom varieties featured greater percent #1 fruit than the three heirloom varieties, which yielded only 17-22% #1 fruit. That difference was statistically significant for 11 of the hyloom varieties. Contessa ranked highest in terms of percentage of #1 fruit, with 82% #1 fruit. As would be expected by their low proportion of #1 fruit, the three heirloom varieties ranked among the four lowest performers in terms of their total pounds/plant of #1 fruit.

**Table 2: Trial results. Standard heirloom reference/comparison varieties are in bold.**

| Variety | Average Fruit Weight (oz) | #1 Fruit per Plant (lb)[1] | Percent #1 Fruit (%)[1] | °Brix (NS)[1,2] | Flavor Rating (0-10)[1] | Significant Defect Types[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21P09 | 12.0 | 2.7 cdefg | 50.3 bcde | 5.1 a | 5.1 ab | |
| 9L08 | 12.8 | 5.1 abcd | 62.7 abc | 5.4 a | 6.4 a | Blossom End Rot |
| Abigail | 14.4 | 5.4 abc | 51.4 bcd | 5.1 a | 4.9 ab | Zippering; Catfacing; Yellow Shoulder |
| Black Angel | 8.7 | 6.3 a | 66.7 ab | 5.3 a | 5.1 ab | Yellow Shoulder; Concentric Cracking |
| BlushingStar | 14.6 | 3.0 bcdefg | 30.1 def | 4.7 a | 5.4 ab | Large Stem Scar; Zippering; Catfacing |
| **Brandywine Pink** | **10.3** | **1.9 defg** | **19.2 f** | **4.7 a** | **6.0 ab** | **Radial & Concentric Cracking; Large Stem Scar; Catfacing;** |
| **Cherokee Purple** | **12.4** | **1.5 fg** | **16.7 f** | **5.1 a** | **5.7 ab** | **Concentric Cracking** |
| Contessa | 12.1 | 4.5 abcdef | 82.9 a | 4.9 a | 5 ab | |
| Harvest Moon | 12.5 | 4.1 abcdef | 48.3 bcde | 5.2 a | 5 ab | |
| Lemon Boy Plus | 8.7 | 4.8 abcde | 60.8 abc | 5.7 a | 5.8 ab | Blossom End Rot; Concentric Cracking |
| Marmalade Skies | 9.4 | 6.2 ab | 72.5 ab | 5.3 a | 4.7 ab | |
| Mountain Rouge | 12 | 1.5 efg | 26.2 ef | 5.6 a | 5.7 ab | Radial Cracking; Blossom End Rot |
| Pink Delicious | 17.9 | 4.3 abcdef | 39.1 cdef | NA | 5.2 ab | Large Stem Scar; Yellow Shoulder |
| Purple Boy | 7.0 | 6.1 ab | 62 abc | 5.3 a | 5 ab | |
| Strawberry Fields | 9.3 | 4.9 abcd | 67 ab | 5.5 a | 5.3 ab | Blossom End Rot |
| **Striped German** | **19.4** | **0.6 g** | **21.9 f** | **NA** | **5.9 ab** | **Large Stem Scar** |
| WonderStar Pink | 11.6 | 4.6 abcdef | 35.8 def | 4.6 a | 5.2 ab | Large Stem Scar; Zippering; Catfacing |
| WonderStar Red | 8.1 gh | 4.7 abcde | 38.3 cdef | 4.2 a | 4.0 b | Zippering; Catfacing |
| Woodstock | 13.4 bc | 4.7 abcde | 52.1 bcd | 5.2 a | 6.4 a | Zippering; Blossom End Rot; Concentric Cracking |

1 Values within a column that contain the same letter are not significantly different from each other at a probability level of 95%. NS = Not significant.
2 Brix was not collected for two varieties that did not yield sufficient #1 fruit at the fourth harvest.
3 Varietal defects are listed if a defect was more prevalent in that variety than most of the others.

Some varieties performed particularly poorly for certain defects. Cherokee Purple, for example, had the lowest percent #1 fruit (16.7%) of all varieties, yet it was flagged for only one significant defect: concentric cracking. This indicates that concentric cracking was the main driver of its high proportion of #2 and non-marketable fruit. Other varieties, such as 21P09 and Harvest Moon, had intermediate percent #1 fruit (50.3% and 48.3%, respectively) but were not flagged for any specific defect type. This suggests that their #2 and non-marketable fruit resulted from a mix of different defects rather than one dominant issue.

Tomato flavor is difficult to quantify, and preferences vary widely among tasters. We collected flavor ratings from 16 volunteers at the 2025 Cornell Vegetable Variety Showcase and Pathology Twilight Meeting. As expected, scores varied substantially, and averages landed in the mid-range (4.0–6.4). However, there were interesting patterns in the relative differences between the varieties. All three heirloom varieties rated highly, placing in the top six of the 19 entries. However, the top two varieties were both hylooms: Woodstock and 9L08, tied with a rating of 6.4.

Tomato flavor is shaped by three main factors: sweetness (Brix), acidity, and a range of volatile compounds contributing fruity, complex, or occasionally "off" notes. We measured Brix for all the varieties that yielded sufficient #1 fruit at the fourth harvest point, as higher Brix often, but not always, correlates with better flavor ratings. Due to substantial plot-to-plot variation within

*continued on page 6*

*continued from page 6*

varieties, we did not detect statistically significant differences. This may reflect slight differences in fruit maturity at sampling or micro-environmental variation in the field. Still, a few patterns stood out. The two heirloom varieties we measured, Brandywine and Cherokee Purple, showed relatively low Brix despite strong flavor ratings, ranking 14th and 11th, respectively, of 17 varieties. Other varieties showed a tighter relationship between Brix and flavor: Lemon Boy Plus, Mountain Rouge, Woodstock, and 9L08 all ranked high for both. Taken together, the Brix and flavor data indicate that growers can choose hyloom varieties without compromising flavor.

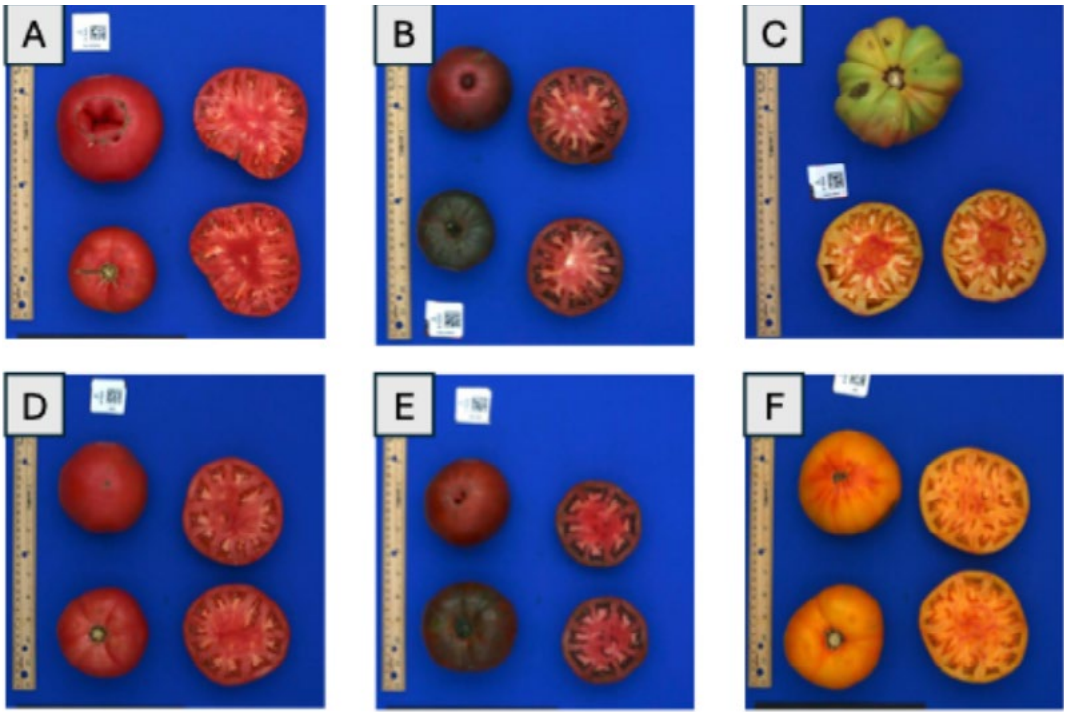


Figure 1. Representative images of fruit from three heirloom varieties and three hyloom varieties of comparable color classes. A) Brandywine, B) Cherokee Purple, C) Striped German, D) Abigail, E) Black Angel, F) 9L08. *Photos: G. Vogel, Cornell*

## Recommendations

Hyloom varieties present an excellent option for growers interested in producing tomatoes with heirloom flavor and appeal from plants that deliver a much higher percentage of #1 fruit. These varieties also present the additional advantage of genetic disease resistance (bred using traditional breeding methods) to many of the most problematic diseases in our region (see Table 1 for complete disease resistance information by variety). Many hyloom varieties are similar in appearance to well-known heirlooms; others exhibit unique traits that distinguish them even further (9L08, for example, combines a bi-color interior with noticeable external fruit stripes).

Specific variety recommendations depend on several factors, including preferred fruit size or color to complement other market offerings, as well as a grower's disease history. For high-tunnel production, varieties with leaf mold resistance may be especially useful: 9L08, 21P09, Lemon Boy Plus, and Contessa. Contessa is also the only variety in our trial with resistance to powdery mildew, another important disease in indoor environments.

Many of the varieties we tested carry late blight resistance, including: 21P09, Mountain Rouge, Black Angel, Contessa, Harvest Moon, Woodstock, Marmalade Skies, Strawberry Fields, Abigail, Wonderstar Red, Wonderstar Pink, and BlushingStar. For growers who frequently deal with Septoria leaf spot, effective resistance options are more limited and include only Wonderstar Red, Wonderstar Pink, and BlushingStar. Finally, nearly all varieties that have been developed in the hyloom category are indeterminate, but three that we tested are determinate, and therefore easier and less labor-intensive to grow in horizontal trellis systems: Black Angel, Wonderstar Red, and Wonderstar Pink.

Still, there are still a few reasons why a grower may choose to plant an heirloom over a hyloom. Heirloom varieties offer name recognition that hylooms generally lack. While a consumer may recognize or even request a "Brandywine" tomato, they are less likely to be familiar with "Abigail" or "Pink Delicious". In addition, as F1 hybrids, growers interested in saving seed will not be able to preserve the variety characteristics of hylooms, as their traits will segregate in saved-seed generations. Hyloom seed is also typically more costly (sometimes up to ten-fold) compared with heirloom seed. However, for most hylooms that cost is offset by the greater percentage of highest-value grade #1 fruit. Hylooms with resistance to your common disease concerns can also reduce your disease management inputs and labor bill.

For more information or to request copies of additional tomato trial reports from previous years, please contact Greg Vogel at gmv23@cornell.edu or 607-255-9233. ●

# Pest Management Reminders for Winter Greens

*Judson Reid, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell Vegetable Program*

Interest in locally grown vegetables continues as the snow falls and temperatures drop. Growers are increasing production to satisfy market demand, with the use of greenhouses or high tunnels. Fall of 2025 saw many new tunnels constructed in the CVP region, with lettuce, arugula and spinach the primary crops.

Pest and disease pressure is often low in the wintertime for greens crops and most are grown with organic techniques. However since crop growth is very slow due to low light, damage from pest and disease can have an outsized impact. For example, a foliar disease can damage a set of spinach leaves across an entire high tunnel in November, and there won't be sufficient regrowth until February to replace those damaged leaves. This means prevention is very important to avoid a lack of inventory in December and January.

Powdery Mildew and aphids are a couple of the common winter challenges growers face. We can use each as an example for prevention strategies.

Lettuce in particular is susceptible to Powdery Mildew. Just a few spots of the white spores on a leaf can cause the entire crop to be unmarketable. Powdery Mildew resistance in lettuce varieties is very difficult to find, with growers noting that red varieties often show symptoms sooner than green. Thus prevention requires cultural practices such as lower planting densities and low relative humidity. To achieve lower relative humidity growers are encouraged to ventilate daily, even when cold or cloudy. Colder air has a lower capacity for moisture, so heating is generally not advised during the darker months such as December.

Aphids are quite at home in winter high tunnels, and will survive freezing temperatures. These pests move across greens species and other vegetable crops. Thus prevention begins with management of any summer crops in the high tunnel. Aphid attractive crops such as cucumbers could increase pest pressure in the winter greens. Since spraying insecticides isn't an easy option during the winter months, biological controls such as Lady Beetles are encouraged. These can be particularly effective against aphids if row covers are in place to concentrate the biological controls.

Wishing all our winter growers success and healthy harvests this winter.

Lower crop density, ventilation and no forced-air heat are all preventative disease control measures in winter lettuce. Just a few spots of Powdery Mildew on a lettuce leaf can cause the entire crop to be unmarketable (inset circle). *Photos: J. Reid, CCE*

# Small-Scale Fresh Market Potato Variety Trial Results

*Margie Lund and Robert Hadad, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell Vegetable Program*

This year, the Cornell Vegetable Program planted a potato variety trial focused on commercially available fresh market potato varieties, with the small-scale potato grower in mind. This trial allowed us to test different varieties of potatoes that might be of interest to consumers at farm markets and see how well they perform in a western NY climate. Here are our overall yield results from the trial as well as some details on some stand out varieties.

Yields varied between varieties, with Baltic Rose and Belmonda bringing in the highest yields of the trial and Superior and Reba performing the worst in the trial (Figure 1).

This year we saw high variability in yields within some varieties due to high heat and low rainfall leading to some plots in higher areas of the field showing plant stress and lower yields, whereas lower lying areas were able to hold water longer and showed better yields. Baltic Rose (red skin,

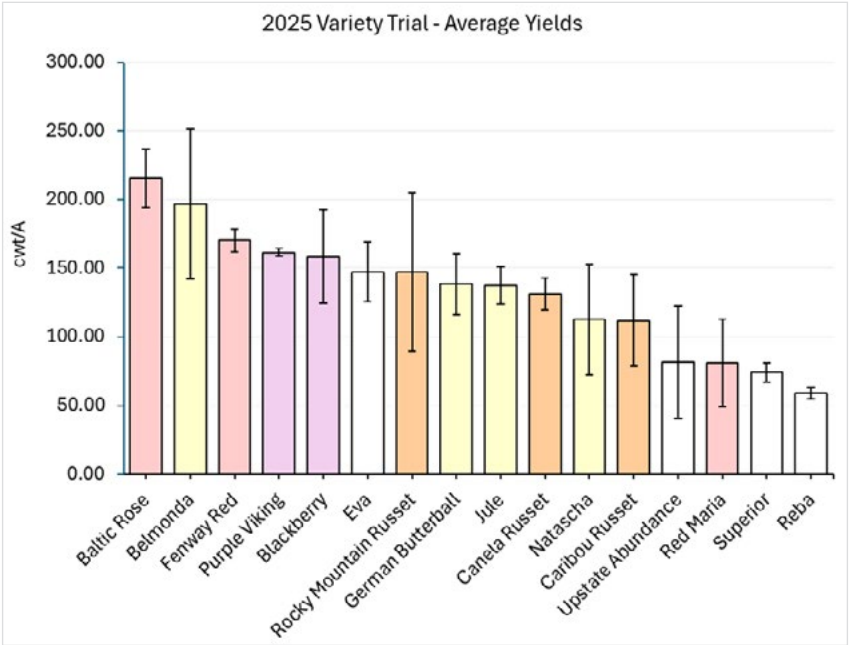


Figure 1. Marketable yield of all varieties in this year's small-scale fresh market potato variety trial. Varieties are color coded according to skin color (red, yellow, purple, white and russet).

*continued on page 8*

*continued from page 7*

yellow flesh) was a standout variety this year and has been a good producer in past trials as well. It was our highest yielding red followed closely by Fenway Red (red skin, white flesh) which also yielded well compared to others in our trial and was consistent across plots. Belmonda (yellow skin, yellow flesh) was our highest yielding yellow variety, though we did see lots of variation in yield in areas where heat and drought stressed plants and some internal rot in some tubers. If not for high yield variability due to weather, Belmonda likely would have been our highest yielder in the trial. Our two purple varieties Purple Viking (purple/pink skin, white flesh) and Blackberry (purple skin, purple flesh) both yielded about the same though we did see some misshapen tubers with Purple Viking. Eva (white skin, white flesh) was our highest yielding white potato, but performed middle of the road in the trial, and overall looked just okay. All other white varieties did not perform well this year. This year we included three russet varieties, Rocky Mountain Russet, Canela Russet, and Caribou Russet. All three yielded in the middle to bottom of our trial, which is not too surprising due to the high heat and lack of rainfall. All three varieties were also small sized and showed varying levels of internal defects such as some hollow heart and internal necrosis.

For questions on the trial and any varieties featured above, please email Margie Lund at mel296@cornell.edu. ●

# Upcoming Events *– See Cornell Vegetable Program events at CVP.CCE.CORNELL.EDU/EVENTS.PHP*

## 2025 Potato Advisory Meeting

**December 16, 2025 (Tuesday) | 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**
**CCE Ontario County, 480 N Main St, Canandaigua, NY 14424**

Come hear the latest on insect pest control and fertility management in potatoes from Cornell University experts. Potato variety trial updates will be shared too. After lunch will be the Empire State Potato Grower's Meeting. The full agenda is available on our website. 1.5 DEC credits in 10, 1a, and 23 for the morning portion of the event, ending at noon.

FREE to attend but pre-registration is requested so that we can make lunch arrangements. **Register online** at https://cvp.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2125. Questions? Contact Margie Lund, 607-377-9109, mel296@cornell.edu

## 2026 Finger Lakes Produce Auction Winter Growers Meeting

**January 8, 2026 (Thursday) | 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM**
**Finger Lakes Produce Auction, 3691 NY-14A, Penn Yan, NY 14527**

At this grower-focused meeting, ag industry experts will discuss food safety, disease management in strawberries, the benefits of using cover crops, plus more. Two grower panel discussions will focus on pest management techniques and irrigation. The full agenda is available on our website: https://cvp.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2129

DEC recertification credits offered: 2.75 credits in categories 10 and 1a; 1.0 credit in categories 21 and 24; 2.0 credits in category 23; 0.75 credits in category 22.

FREE to attend. No pre-registration required. Questions? Contact Judson Reid, 585-313-8912.

## Mid-Ohio Growers Meeting

**January 8-9, 2026 (Thursday - Friday) | Time: TBA**
**Mt. Hope Event Center, 8076 SR 241, Millersburg, OH 44654**

Event details (brochure), contact information and vendor inquires can made be by phone at 330-275-7566, or online at: http://midohiogrowers.com/

## NOFA-NY Annual Winter Conference

**January 9 - 10, 2026 (Friday - Saturday)**
**Purchase College, State University of New York, 735 Anderson Hill Rd, Purchase, NY 10577**

Events for farmers, food system professionals, educators, advocates, homesteaders, and gardeners who are passionate about advancing the organic principles that create better food and farming systems.

**For more information and registration: https://nofany.org/**. Save $10 with an early bird ticket! Offer expires 12/12/2025.

## 2026 Dyson Agricultural and Food Business Outlook Conference

**January 12, 2026 (Monday) | 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**
**Stocking Hall, Cornell University**

New York agricultural leaders learn about the short-and long-term outlook for agriculture and agricultural products. Topics include a 2026 U.S. agricultural economic outlook, trends in local and regional food systems, impact of solar on farmland values, and labor updates.

Afternoon sessions will focus on dairy and fruit/vegetable crops. **Register: https://cvent.me/y4VMOw**

*continued on page 9*

*continued from page 8*

# Upcoming Events

## 2026 Becker Forum – Smart Strategies for a Changing Landscape

**January 14, 2026 (Wednesday) | Time: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**
**Cornell AgriTech, Jordan Hall, 630 W North St, Geneva, NY**

The Becker Forum, an annual gathering of growers, farm managers, and industry experts, offers a comprehensive program tailored to address the most pressing challenges facing the agricultural community today. Producers need to stay up to speed with major changes in H-2A, overtime, and union organizing, as well as important issues like tax credits, retirement plans, and avoiding fraud and scams.

Cost: $90 for advanced registrations; $120 walk-ins. **Register:** **https://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/2025/11/13/nys-veg-growers-association-announces-the-2026-becker-forum/**. Register by phone at 315-787-0530.

## 2026 Empire State Producers Expo

**January 15, 2026 (Thursday) – Berries**
**January 16, 2026 (Friday) – Vegetables**
**Cornell AgriTech, Jordan Hall, 630 W North St, Geneva, NY 14456**

For more information: https://nysvga.org/2026-empire-state-expo/ or call 585-993-1767.

## Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention

**January 27 - 29, 2026 (Tues - Thurs)**
**Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA**

Approximately 2,000 fruit & vegetable growers, students, educators, and extension personnel will participate in the 2026 Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention. Over 160 companies will be represented in the trade show. Monday will feature pre-convention workshops and a farm market bus tour. The various associations' committees are diligently planning the convention educational sessions with the goal of building on the 48-year history of a premier grower educational event. Full details available at: https://mafvc.org/ or contact Tammy Linn at 717-973-5915.

## Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention

**February 18 - 19, 2026**
**Niagara Falls Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada**

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention (OFVC) is an annual 2-day gathering of horticultural crop producers involved in the production of fruits and vegetables. The convention is attended by a cross section of the horticultural sector including government, industry, business, consultants, producers, associations, researchers and educators from across Canada and features a great lineup of horticultural experts, educational sessions, trade show exhibitors and great networking opportunities. OFVC is a great show close to home for many WNY growers. Full details at: ofvc.ca

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**
**Cornell Vegetable Program**

480 North Main Street
Canandaigua, NY 14424

VEGEdge
YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR RESEARCH-BASED KNOWLEDGE

VEGEdge
YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR RESEARCH-BASED KNOWLEDGE

VegEdge is the highly regarded newsletter produced by the Cornell Vegetable Program. It provides readers with information on upcoming meetings, pesticide updates, pest management strategies, cultural practices, marketing ideas, and research results from Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension. VegEdge is produced every few weeks, with increased frequency leading up to and during the growing season.

## Contact Us

### VEGETABLE SPECIALISTS

**Elizabeth Buck** | 585-406-3419 cell | emb273@cornell.edu
fresh market vegetables, weed management, soil health

**Robert Hadad** | 585-739-4065 cell | rgh26@cornell.edu
farm food safety, organic, business & marketing, fresh market vegetables

**Christy Hoepting** | 585-721-6953 cell | cah59@cornell.edu
onions, cabbage, broccoli, garlic, pesticide management

**Julie Kikkert, Team Leader** | 585-313-8160 cell | jrk2@cornell.edu
processing crops (table beets, carrots, peas, snap beans, sweet corn)

**Lori Koenick** | 585-469-5798 cell | lbk75@cornell.edu
fresh market vegetables, mushrooms, urban agriculture

**Margie Lund** | 607-377-9109 cell | mel296@cornell.edu
potatoes, dry beans, post-harvest handling and storage

**Judson Reid** | 585-313-8912 cell | jer11@cornell.edu
greenhouses/high tunnels, small farming operations, fresh market vegs

### PROGRAM ASSISTANTS & SUPPORT

Camila Ichazo | lichazo@cornell.edu

Angela Ochterski | aep63@cornell.edu

### ADMINISTRATION

Peter Landre | ptl2@cornell.edu

Steve Reiners | sr43@cornell.edu

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**
**Cornell Vegetable Program**

For more information about our program, email cce-cvp@cornell.edu or visit CVP.CCE.CORNELL.EDU