

North Dakota Home Garden Variety Trials

SUMMARY
2025



Summary of Results

A team of volunteers in North Dakota and surrounding states/provinces evaluated promising vegetable and cut flower varieties. Gardeners at 313 sites submitted results this year. They rated varieties for health, earliness, yield and food/ornamental quality. Reports of 1,723 side-by-side comparisons were submitted.

In each report, they noted which of the two varieties they preferred (Pref) and which of the

varieties they would recommend (Rec) to other gardeners. They had the option of recommending one, both or neither of the varieties in each trial.

The gardeners rated the performance of each variety using a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = poor and 10 = excellent. The preference and recommendation percentages as well as mean ratings for each variety are presented below along with our conclusions for each trial.



Bean, Green

Both of these popular varieties were outstanding in yield and taste qualities. *Provider* produced earlier harvests and higher yields overall; its pods were of good quality. Gardeners who preferred *Bush Blue Lake 274* often noted its good flavor.

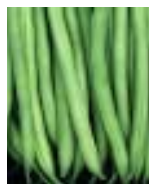
Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
B.B. Lake 274	48	74	7.40
Provider	52	77	7.66
(41 sites)			



Bean, Dark Green

Both varieties were healthy, productive and easy to pick. Their pods were uniform, straight, tasty and slow to get seedy. *Lewis* produced an earlier and more concentrated harvest. *Dark Horse* had beautiful, dark, smooth pods.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Dark Horse	44	77	7.21
Lewis	56	72	7.53
(48 sites)			



Bean, Green Filet Organic

Compass plants were more compact but produced high yields. *Compass* pods were smaller, crisper and more slender. *Maxibel* plants were much more vigorous; they produced earlier. *Maxibel* pods were longer, thicker and more tender.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Compass	53	59	7.13
Maxibel	47	67	7.50
(49 sites)			



Bean, Green Romano

Few gardeners were interested in this trial. *Roma II* is the old standby variety, and it performed well. Every gardener recommended it. *Velero* was reported to have superior pod flavor and texture, but this was not mentioned by gardeners.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Roma II	67	100	8.33
Velero	33	67	6.00
(5 sites)			



Bean, Yellow Filet

Both varieties produced long, slim and straight pods. *Borsalino* germinated much better, leading to much higher yields. *Gerritsun* germinated poorly. We do not know if this was due to a genetic weakness or a bad batch of seeds.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Borsalino	77	69	7.15
Gerritsun	23	27	4.27
(32 sites)			



Beet, Red

Both varieties grew well, and gardeners were split on their preferred variety. *Red Cloud* had an edge in root quality both in appearance and taste. *Grenade* had an edge in germination and plant health, and it was ready to be harvested earlier.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Grenade	48	80	7.97
Red Cloud	52	83	8.03
(37 sites)			



Beet, Red Organic

Sweet Dakota Bliss matured earlier and produced a higher yield. Gardeners were pleased with the root quality of both varieties. *Shiraz* received higher ratings for appearance, and *Sweet Dakota Bliss* received higher ratings for taste.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Shiraz</i>	38	67	7.10
<i>Swt Dakota Bliss</i>	62	77	7.90
(31 sites)			



Beet, Gold

More gardeners preferred the looks of the globular, pinkish-orange roots of *Golden Boy* over the oblong, golden roots of *Badger Flame*. *Badger Flame* has a unique, non-earthly taste, but more gardeners preferred the flavor of *Golden Boy*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Badger Flame</i>	37	66	6.75
<i>Golden Boy</i>	63	72	7.32
(37 sites)			



Carrot, Early Organic

Napoli and *Yaya* were exceptional. Their roots were uniform, crunchy and flavorful. *Napoli* had slightly larger carrots and produced better yields. Gardeners liked the looks (barrel shape with blunt tips) and sweetness of *Yaya*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Napoli</i>	58	86	8.16
<i>Yaya</i>	42	75	7.96
(69 sites)			



Carrot, Main Crop Organic

Bengala roots were rated higher. They were straight, blunt-tipped, uniform, crunchy, sweet and flavorful. *Dolciva* roots were bigger, less uniform in shape, straight, smooth and sweet. *Bengala* produced higher yields at more sites.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Bengala</i>	57	87	7.89
<i>Dolciva</i>	43	70	7.60
(66 sites)			



Carrot, Bunching

Orange Blaze received very high scores for its good yields and beautiful roots. *Orange Blaze* consistently produced long, straight and smooth roots. Gardeners liked the uniformity and deeper orange color of *Orange Fancy* roots.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Orange Blaze</i>	62	85	8.08
<i>Orange Fancy</i>	38	65	7.44
(53 sites)			



Corn, Early Super Sweet

These varieties germinated well and matured at the same time. *Awaken* was a consistent performer and was preferred by many more gardeners. *Awaken* was more productive. More gardeners preferred the look and taste of *Awaken* ears.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Awaken</i>	50	83	7.55
<i>Bolt</i>	50	55	7.17
(36 sites)			



Corn, Midseason Super Sweet

Superb showed strong seedling vigor, leading to earlier maturity and higher yields. Gardeners liked the sweetness, tenderness and color of *Superb* kernels. *Xtra-Tender 274A* has performed well in the past but not this year.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Superb</i>	81	75	7.81
<i>Xtra-Tender 274A</i>	19	44	6.69
(18 sites)			



Corn, Yellow Super Sweet

XTH11274 was preferred by a vast majority of gardeners. These persons were extremely impressed by its large, full ears. More gardeners preferred the taste of *Vision MXR*. *Vision MXR* ripened earlier at more sites, too.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Vision MXR</i>	27	73	7.45
<i>XTH11274</i>	73	82	8.18
(14 sites)			



Corn, Early Synergistic

Gardeners split when selecting their preferred varieties. *Evolution* germinated better at more sites. Its stalks were robust and produced higher yields. The ear size and yields of *Sweetness* were smaller, but its flavor was clearly superior.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Evolution</i>	50	71	6.86
<i>Sweetness</i>	50	71	6.71
(17 sites)			



Cucumber, Burpless

Summer Dance ripened quickly and produced high yields. Its cukes were longer, straighter, smoother, glossier and more slender than those of *Burpless Beauty*. Many gardeners liked *Burpless Beauty*, but it did not excel in any trait.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Burpless Beauty</i>	43	63	6.78
<i>Summer Dance</i>	57	78	7.46
(96 sites)			



Cucumber, Pickling Organic

Provision matured earlier and produced more cukes at more sites. *Provision* cukes were darker green in color and more slender. *Double Yield* cukes looked more like a traditional pickler: stubby with a yellow/white tinge on its skin.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Double Yield</i>	43	60	6.60
<i>Provision</i>	57	77	7.70
(57 sites)			



Cucumber, Slicing

General Lee produced earlier and higher yields at more sites. Many gardeners liked *General Lee* for its crisp, flavorful, smooth-skinned fruits. *Gateway* is famous for its resistance to diseases; *General Lee* matched *Gateway* in vine health.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Gateway</i>	38	71	7.06
<i>General Lee</i>	63	69	7.62
(42 sites)			



Gourd, Ornamental

The vines of *Autumn Wings Blend* were much more aggressive, and they produced a massive number of beautiful gourds. *Gizmo* generated more excitement because of its larger, unique, multicolored, winged gourds.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Autumn Wings B.</i>	49	79	6.78
<i>Gizmo</i>	51	87	7.05
(41 sites)			



Lettuce, Green Bibb

Both varieties were outstanding. *Gatsby* had higher yields and looked more attractive to more gardeners. *Gatsby* resisted bolting better. *Newham* leaves were smoother and easier to clean than the crinkly leaves of *Gatsby*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Gatsby</i>	57	96	8.17
<i>Newham</i>	43	72	7.63
(28 sites)			



Lettuce, Green Leaf

Both varieties were outstanding. They were healthy, beautiful, resisted bolting, and had good flavor. *Grazion* showed an edge in earliness. *Starfighter* showed an edge in taste.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Grazion</i>	54	77	7.92
<i>Starfighter</i>	46	77	7.85
(32 sites)			



Lettuce, Green Romaine

Gardeners enjoyed the taste of both. *Sunland* was impressive and reliable. *Sunland* produced the first yield and produced more lettuce overall at more sites. The heads of *Chalupa* were smaller, full and tight. Both varieties resisted bolting.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Chalupa</i>	44	75	7.44
<i>Sunland</i>	56	93	7.87
(45 sites)			



Lettuce, Red Leaf

Gardeners loved the look of the dark red leaves of *Shirane Sky*. It was crisper in texture and was rated higher for taste. *New Red Fire* grew faster and produced more lettuce at more sites. Gardeners mentioned it was tender.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
New Red Fire	53	76	7.12
Shirane Sky	47	82	7.41
(17 sites)			



Lettuce, Red Summer Crisp

Both received high ratings. *Cherokee* and its dark red leaves were especially beautiful, but *Chrystal* and its predominantly green leaves tasted better. *Chrystal* was ready to be harvested earlier, but *Cherokee* produced higher yields overall.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Cherokee	50	77	7.63
Chrystal	50	77	7.87
(31 sites)			



Melon, Cantaloupe

Atlantis germinated better and had healthier vines. It was a more reliable producer across sites. *Atlantis* melons were attractive, sweet and flavorful. The varieties produced similar yields, and their melons ripened at the same time.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Atlantis	78	73	7.14
Olympic Express	22	41	5.54
(43 sites)			



Okra, Green

Okra demands heat. We enjoyed a warm growing season in 2025, but neither variety excelled. The compact plants of *Jambalaya 2.0* were easy to manage and produced more pods. It outperformed *Clemson Spineless 80* in all traits.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Clemson Sp. 80	29	57	5.29
Jambalaya 2.0	71	79	6.58
(16 sites)			



Pumpkin, Large Round

Both varieties received solid ratings. Most gardeners preferred *Big Doris*. *Big Doris* pumpkins had a classic, round shape with deep orange color and thick handles. Yields were comparable. Fruits weighing 20+ pounds were common.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Big Doris	61	80	7.87
Dynasty	39	77	7.47
(37 sites)			



Pumpkin, Large Tall

Big Loretta matured earlier, had bigger pumpkins and produced higher yields. The dark orange color of *Early Giant* pumpkins was attractive, but most gardeners preferred the overall look of *Big Loretta* pumpkins.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Big Loretta	67	84	7.37
Early Giant	33	68	6.26
(25 sites)			



Pumpkin, Extra Large

Both varieties received good ratings, but *Denali* was preferred by more gardeners. Every gardener recommended *Denali*. *Denali* pumpkins matured earlier, were bigger and judged to be more attractive at more sites.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Apogee	38	67	7.22
Denali	63	100	8.56
(14 sites)			



Pumpkin, Giant

Neither variety received impressive ratings. More gardeners recommended *Grower's Giant*. It ripened earlier and produced bigger pumpkins at more sites. The pumpkins of *Big Moose* had a deeper orange color and better handles.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Big Moose	36	50	5.07
Grower's Giant	64	75	5.57
(17 sites)			



Spinach, Savoyed-Leaf

Both varieties grew well in spring and fall plantings. Neither variety stood out from the other. Gardeners who preferred *Green Beret* often noted its outstanding taste. Gardeners who preferred *Sunangel* liked its robust plants and large leaves.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Green Beret	44	66	6.81
Sunangel	56	66	6.96
(57 sites)			



Squash, Green Scallop

Green Lightning is known for the vivid striping on its fruits, but more gardeners preferred the solid green look of *Starship* fruits. The early maturity of *Green Lightning* was impressive. The yields and tastes of the varieties were not remarkable.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Green Lightning	62	75	8.08
Starship	38	83	7.33
(14 sites)			



Squash, Green Zucchini

Kefren germinated better and produced higher yields at more sites. *Kefren* fruits had fewer seeds, but there was no difference in the taste of these varieties. Wet weather led to both varieties suffering from powdery mildew late in season.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Desert	39	61	7.35
Kefren	61	81	7.84
(35 sites)			



Squash, Yellow Summer

Multipik was a workhorse. It germinated better, matured earlier and produced loads of fruits. The vast majority of gardeners recommended *Multipik*, but most preferred *Butterfingers* for the superior looks and taste of its fruits.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Butterfingers	55	55	6.09
Multipik	45	82	6.82
(14 sites)			



Squash, Butternut

Block Party yields were earlier and much higher than those of *Quantum*. The fruits of *Block Party* were blocky and attractive with bright orange, flavorful flesh. *Quantum* was okay but did not excel in any trait; many of its fruits did not ripen.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Block Party	74	77	7.71
Quantum	26	59	6.71
(27 sites)			



Squash, Round Butternut

Autumn Frost was preferred over *Spellcast* by most gardeners because of the sweet, nutty taste of its fruits. *Spellcast* vines were vigorous and produced much larger fruits. *Spellcast* matured earlier at more sites. Overall yields were similar.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Autumn Frost	65	80	7.14
Spellcast	35	75	7.38
(27 sites)			



Squash, Gray

Both varieties produced attractive, deeply ribbed fruits. The flesh of *Blue Harvest* was delicious, moister and much sweeter compared to that of *Mint Prince*. *Mint Prince* was fun to decorate with, but its flesh was drier and less flavorful.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Blue Harvest	56	82	7.09
Mint Prince	44	73	6.91
(13 sites)			



Squash, Orange Spaghetti

Hasta La Pasta matured earlier and produced higher yields. Most of the gardeners who expressed a preference on fruit quality preferred the looks and taste of *Hasta La Pasta*. *Orangetti* did not excel in any trait.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Hasta La Pasta	64	67	6.83
Orangetti	36	50	6.58
(16 sites)			



Squash, Specialty Winter

Speckled Hound was healthier, ripened earlier and produced higher yields at more sites. *Troll* fruits were small, making them suitable for serving small families. Both could be used for decorating; most preferred the looks of *Speckled Hound*.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Speckled Hound	80	82	7.80
Troll	20	55	6.50
(12 sites)			



Swiss Chard, White-Stem

Fordhook Giant grew faster, produced over a longer time and produced higher yields. A key attribute of *Silverado* is its glossy, crinkly leaves, but more gardeners felt the leaves of *Fordhook Giant* were more attractive and easier to clean.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Fordhook Giant	62	69	7.69
Silverado	38	54	5.85
(14 sites)			



Watermelon, Hybrid

Gardeners liked but did not love them. There was no clear winner on taste or overall. *Pronto* flesh was pink, sweet and juicy with relatively few seeds. *Top Gun* melons were generally smaller. Its flesh was bright red, crisp and juicy.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Pronto	52	63	7.13
Top Gun	48	67	6.88
(28 sites)			



Watermelon, Open-Pollinated

Klecky Sweet was a disaster. It germinated poorly, and no gardeners recommended it. *Klecky Sweet* grew slowly and its melons often rotted. *Sweet Dakota Rose* showed again it is one of the most reliable and delicious watermelons to grow.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Klecky Sweet	0	0	2.31
Swt Dakota Rose	100	92	7.62
(25 sites)			



Sunflower, Bicolor

Desert Sun had large, beautiful blooms on sturdy stalks. It bloomed early, and gardeners loved its colors. Every gardener recommended it. *Florenza* lacked vigor at most sites. Its flowers were small and its plants were shorter.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Desert Sun	90	100	8.43
Florenza	10	43	6.24
(21 sites)			



Sunflower, Bicolor Mixes

Neither variety received high ratings. *Daydream Mixture* was preferred by most. It was healthier and produced more flowers at more sites. More gardeners liked its colors. *Magic Roundabout* did not excel in any trait.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Daydream Mix.	60	81	7.00
Magic Round.	40	67	6.52
(23 sites)			



Sunflower, Lemon Yellow

Gardeners liked *Valentine*, but they strongly preferred the beauty of *Butter Chiffon*. The blooms of *Butter Chiffon* were lovely with their lemony, delicate petals. *Valentine* bloomed early and produced many flowers.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Butter Chiffon	79	80	7.93
Valentine	21	73	6.73
(15 sites)			



Sunflower, Soft Bicolor

Strawberry Blonde outperformed *Gypsy Charmer* in all traits. It germinated better, was healthier, bloomed earlier and produced more flowers. *Strawberry Blonde* was a better cut flower. *Gypsy Charmer* performed better in previous trials.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
Gypsy Charmer	19	43	5.63
Strawberry Blonde	81	83	7.38
(36 sites)			



Sunflower, Double-Petal Dwarf

Baby Bear grew well and most gardeners preferred it. *Baby Bear* bloomed earlier at more sites. Its flowers were cute and outstanding for cut flower arrangements. Gardeners enjoyed the fluffy flowers of *Teddy Bear*, and most recommended it.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Baby Bear</i>	57	86	7.95
<i>Teddy Bear</i>	43	73	7.32
(27 sites)			



Sunflower, Orange Single-Stem

ProCut Orange Excel bloomed first, looked more attractive and was a better cut flower. Its plants were sturdy and uniform. Gardeners liked its deeper orange color. *Jua Maya* did not show a major weakness, but no strength either.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Jua Maya</i>	27	45	5.91
<i>ProCut Or. Exc.</i>	73	73	7.09
(14 sites)			



Zinnia, Flaming Mixes

The colors of both mixes were bold, warm and bright. Both mixes received very high ratings. They were easy to grow, bloomed prolifically, attracted pollinators, and made wonderful cut flowers. This was our most popular trial.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Lava Lamp</i>	56	94	8.32
<i>So. of the Border</i>	44	85	7.92
(80 sites)			



Zinnia, Pink Mixes

Both mixes were very showy and pretty. The plants were tall and healthy, producing many blooms all summer. *Blushing Bride* had a blend of soft and charming colors. The colors of *Strawberry Parfait* were brighter with more shades of pink.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Blushing Bride</i>	49	83	7.70
<i>Strawberry Parfait</i>	51	84	7.81
(72 sites)			



Zinnia, Red Shades

These were two gorgeous mixes. They produced loads of beautiful flowers all summer. These mixes contained the same deep red varieties. Gardeners split on whether they liked the addition of light red or purple seeds to the mixes.

Variety	Pref (%)	Rec (%)	Rating
<i>Berry Tart</i>	54	88	8.15
<i>Merlot Mix</i>	46	84	7.85
(59 sites)			

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