



UNIVERSITY OF
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Cooperative Extension Service

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

VEGETARIAN

A Vegetable Crops Extension Publication

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I. NOTES OF INTEREST

A. Vegetable Crops Calendar.

July 30-31, and August 1, 1996. 4H Congress, Horticulture Events. Judging, Demonstrations, Leadership Track. Contact Jim Stephens.

II. COMMERCIAL VEGETABLES

A. 1994-95 Vegetable Summary.

The Florida Agricultural Statistics - Vegetable Summary for the 1994-95 season has been published by the Florida Agricultural Statistics Service. In 1994-95 the value of vegetables produced in Florida totaled \$1.48 billion. This was down 5 percent or \$80.9 million from the 1993-94 season value of \$1.56 billion.

The 1994-95 acreage harvested of 356,800 acres, dropped 41/2 percent or 16,729 acres from the previous season.

Tropical storm Gordon passing over the state in November, and freezes during February lowered acreage harvested of the crops estimated.

Tomato again led with 31.3% of the total production value. Bell pepper had a 12.8% share with strawberries (8%), sweet corn (7.1%) and potatoes (5.7%) following.

The following table gives the harvested acreage and value of each vegetable for the 1994-95 season.

Crop	Harvested Acreage	Total Value (X\$1000)
Snap bean	30,500	50,597
Cabbage	7,000	17,388
Carrot	5,600	15,361
Sweet Corn	36,900	105,311
Cucumber	13,200	42,610
Eggplant	2,300	13,500
Escarole	1,600	11,057
Pepper	20,300	188,938
Potato	42,900	84,010
Radish	15,700	23,873
Squash	11,900	41,686
Strawberry	6,000	118,608
Tomato	49,000	461,369
Watermelon	33,000	61,793
Other Veggies	80,900	243,850
Total	356,800	\$1,479,951

(Stall, Vegetarian 96-06)

B. Field Scale Planting Depth Trials.

Prior to the February freezes of '96, a one acre, tomato planting depth trial was set out in Collier County with H & R Farms. A standard planting depth (set to between the root ball and cotyledon leaves) was compared to setting the tomato between the cotyledon

leaves and the first true leaf. The 'Solimar' tomatoes, planted on January 6, went through four freezes between January 9 and February 18.

The grower commented that he believed the deeper set plants "fared better" against the freezes than his shallower plantings. His crew leader preferred the deeper plants because it appeared the suckers came off more easily and the plants stood more upright after pruning, making tying easier.

The overall volume of production was low due to the cool spring and resulted in 1228 (deep) vs 1221 (standard) cartons of tomatoes from two picks. However, previous depth trials with tomato have taught us that the major impact of transplant planting depth is at first harvest. Therefore, we looked at the first harvest trends in this trial (Table 1).

These data are from a large scale on-farm observational trial which was not designed to be statistically analyzed. However, they confirm what has been statistically proven from Homestead to Quincy over the past three years; deeper planting results in earlier production (% color), more extra large fruit, and sometimes greater overall first harvest yield.

On a conservative market of \$8, \$6, \$4 (XL, Lg., Med.) these results would return \$318 per acre more to the grower than his standard planting depth. The Packer, on the week of April 23rd (harvest date), quoted tomato prices at \$22, \$18, and \$14 or a return to the grower of \$942, simply for welding a 1" extension on the spikes of the hole puncher! More on-farm, large scale trials are planned around the state in the fall.

Table 1. First harvest yield from a one acre tomato planting depth field trial with H & R Farms, Immokalee, FL in spring 1996.

Treatment	25 lb cartons				% Color
	XL	Lg.	Med.	Total	
Standard	322	285	125	732	8
Deep	344	298	141	783	10

(Vavrina & Swanson, Vegetarian 96-06)

III. VEGETABLE GARDENING

A. Mini-Corn for the Garden.

Sweet corn is just one of many vegetables whose miniature form is considered a delicacy. This "baby corn" can be either the

ears of normal sized varieties harvested at very immature stage, or the ears from a genetically dwarfed variety. The latter is more often the

case with commercial growers who supply this specialty, gourmet market. Miniature sweet corn is used in a variety of ways, the most popular of which are as hors d'oeuvres, stir fries, and pickles or cooked whole in soups and stews. For this reason, miniature vegetables including baby sweet corn are grown to some extent by home gardeners.

The following are some of the varieties that are sold and advertised by seed companies for growing and harvesting as baby corn.

1. 'Baby'.
Description: Tender, finger-like ears, delicately flavored, entirely edible. Excellent for freezing. Best harvested within 5 days of appearance of silks. Sold by: Nichols Garden Nursery, 1190 N. Pacific Highway, Albany, Oregon 97321.
2. Golden Midget' (also called 'Golden Miniature'.)
Description: Ears 3-5 inches long, 8-12 rows of butter yellow kernels per ear. Plant is 20-40 inches tall producing 3-5 small ears per plant, standard maturity. Source: Several seed companies, including: R. H. Shumway, PO Box 1, Granitville, SC 29829 and Park Seed Co., Inc., Cokesbury Rd., Greenwood, SC 29646.
3. 'Glacier'.
Description: Short-season, dwarf white variety. Source: Fisher's Garden Store, PO Box 236, Belgrade, MT 59714.
4. Miniature hybrid. Geo. Park Seed Co., Greenwood, SC 29646.
5. 'Baby Asian'.
Description. Harvest at silking. Source: Le Marche Seeds Int., Box 190, Dixon, CO 95620.
6. 'Baby Blue'.
Description. (Popcorn) Blue ears, only 3-4" long. Produces multiple ears on 5' tall plant.
7. 'Bo Peep'.
Description. (Popcorn) pink ears. Source: Shepherd's Seeds. 30 Irene Street, Farrington, CN 06790.
8. 'Strawberry Popcorn'.
Source: Shepherd's Seeds.

(Stephens, Vegetarian 96-06)

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