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I. NOTES OF INTEREST

A. Vegetable Crops Calendar.


II. COMMERCIAL VEGETABLES

A. Results of the Vegetarian Questionnaire.

Our survey questionnaire regarding the Vegetarian newsletter is complete and summarized here. We had a real good response and there were many good and helpful comments. The specialists will be meeting shortly to discuss the results and come up with a plan to revamp the Vegetarian. We are particularly happy with the assistance offered by many agents to help with some of the articles. You can bet that will be part of the revamping program! Take a moment to review the results and send me an e-mail on your reaction to the results. We will get going on the revamping process ASAP.

(Hochmuth, Vegetarian 97-09)
D. Vegetable Production Articles

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E. Vegetable Gardening

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F. Vegetarian Index

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Question #7

What do you think about the frequency of issue (monthly)?

A. - About right - 43
B. - Too frequent - 2
C. - Too infrequent - 1

Question #8

The current format of the newsletter is written for the agents rather than clientele. Comments about the presentation format? (comments listed)

- "Let agents edit and write in clientele format for their own county program newsletters and newspaper articles"
- "Should be written for agents as primary recipients - mixed emotions about clientele receiving this newsletter - agents are looking for articles for their own newsletter"
- "Continue to target agents, please"
- Is e-mail distribution possible?
- Information useful to backyard gardeners is needed.
- Would like it available electronically so it can be used more readily in newsletters
- A regular article on specific vegetables would be helpful.
- There were several comments of "good", "O.K.", "I like it", "it's fine", "keep format",

Question #9

Would you like to see more focus on articles dealing with topics, issues, or reports such as pesticide regulations or small research reports?

yes - 42
no - 2

Question #10

If you answered yes to question 9, then what types of articles would you like to see?
1 (fewer) 2 (about the same) 3 (more)

A. Regulatory issues

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B. Cultural tips

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C. News from other states

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D. News from the counties

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E. Timely gardening tips

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F. Gardening reports

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G. Marketing

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GPS tech
- Ag. Eng. (farm machinery update)
- farm chemical update
- summaries from journals
- crop of the month
- physiological disorders
- new developments, procedures, equipment
- IPM tips
- grower experiences
- new pubs from IFAS and elsewhere
- drip irrigation management
- fertigation
- specialty crops info
- large farms demo results
- county survey-minor vegetable production
- community garden reports
- no till, low till veggies
- soil solarization

Question #14
Fill up the following blank space with ideas to help the Vegetarian help you.

(Summary of responses)
- "in-depth review of one crop a month"
- nothing is too simple - some agents need the basics
- more info for Master Gardener (very little commercial production in county)
- "info is not timely and appropriate for immediate use - need current pest and field problems each month would be useful with identification and control suggestions - missing area is labor regulations"
- "need practical info that keep agents out front with current info that can be used with clientele - we should not read in newspaper something that should have been in the Vegetarian"
- make articles short with pertinent info - need more than label updates for herbicide section
- put Vegetarian on the vax/web
- suggest two newsletters - one for commercial vegetables and one for home gardeners and organic producers
- "pest of the month" should be current problem pest
- "an editorial from editor on current success - trends and other deep thoughts"
- "current problems and activities are good - I have to cover the total

Crop protection update
- variety recommendations
- new, unique, alternative crops
- variety yearly commercial
- variety yearly homeowner
- university developed variety info
- latest pest alert
- latest biotech from private?
- irrigation technology
extension programs so timely problem solving articles are helpful
• suggest grad students do leg work for review and summary of pertinent journal articles - here appropriate, list sources of info for articles, “For Further Reading”
• needs more meat - energize it
• “current interest topics would be helpful in making my newsletter better”
• “Can you put past issues on WWW in text format for easy reading and printing?”
• put the newsletter on the web
• any info directed toward large urban population audience or that MG’s can use for their demo garden lecture series is extremely helpful
• need more herb info - more info on tomato problems and other common pest and cultural problems
• “trends in state production”
• “how politics impacts production”
• “niche markets in winter or summer production, i.e. collard production under shade in the summer”
• “weird stuff that might influence profitability for a small farmer - like row covers in the winter on _w/ drip underneath”

B. American Society for Plasticulture 27th Congress.

The 27th A.S.P. Congress will be held in Tucson, Arizona on February 18-21, 1998. The Congress includes a mix of educational presentations on the latest research and a day of tours of plasticulture in the Tucson area. Presentation will include: crop response to rowcovers, standard black mulch, and colored mulches; irrigation technologies; disposal and recycling of agricultural films; soil solarization with plastics; film properties; plastics use in aquaculture; and several papers dealing with greenhouse technologies and crop response. In addition, there will be other invited presentations from leading experts in the field of plasticulture.

Plasticulture businesses exhibit at the Congress Trade Show, which will be open Thursday and Friday. The Trade Show Reception and A.S.P. Awards Banquet will be held Thursday evening. For Friday evening, an optional “Special Night Out” provides attendees with dinner and a tour of Biosphere 2 Center, and environmental research and education project of Columbia University just half an hour north of Tucson. Saturday’s tours offer a choice for attendees. One tour will focus on mulching, drip irrigation practices, and aquaculture. The other tour will feature greenhouse production. Because each tour takes off in a different direction across Arizona, there will only be time for attendees to be part of one tour.

Registration materials will be available in early October. Full Congress registration for attendees will be $295 for members and $375 for non-members, which includes all functions and the Saturday tour. However, attendees will be able to purchase a basic registration for $240 (members) and $325 (non-members) without the Special Night Out or the tour. These attendees can purchase tickets as they desire for the Special Night Out at $45 per person, or the tour at $25. Extra banquet tickets will be available for $35 per person.

If you may be interested in attending the 1998 A.S.P. Congress, contact Bob Hochmuth (904)362-1725 or Suncom 821-3050. Bob is working on partial funding support for county faculty but, needs to know your interest immediately to be included.

(Bob Hochmuth, Vegetarian 97-09)

III. PESTICIDE UPDATE

A. Herbicides and Herbs.

Herbs are very minor, both in production acreage and in daily consumption. Fresh market herb production accounts for a
total of 6,389 acres nationally (1992 Agricultural Census).

The herb subgroup as defined by EPA (40 CFR 180.41) includes: Angelica; balm; basil; borage; burnet; camomile; catnip; chervil (dried); chive; Chinese chive; clary; coriander leaf (cilantro or Chinese parsley); cury (leaf); dill; horehound; hyssop; lavender; lemongrass; lovage (leaf); marigold; marjoram; nasturtium; parsley (dried); pennyroyal; rosemary; rue; sage; savory, summer and winter; sweet bay; tansy; tarragon; thyme; wintergreen; woodruff; and wormwood. Mint, although considered an herb, is not included in the EPA crop group, but is considered separately due to potential residues found in mint oil production.

1 [Note: green or fresh parsley is in the leafy greens subgroup with lettuce, endive etc.]

The crop grouping scheme has been used successfully to obtain tolerances in a number of minor crops. The crop groups were established to reduce the number of trials needed on related commodities in order to obtain tolerances on those commodities. Unfortunately the herb crop subgroup has not been useful for herbicides.

Shawn Steed, a graduate assistant in Horticultural Sciences has made an exhaustive search to obtain herbicide labels for herbs grown in Florida. Unfortunately, other than mint, there are none that can be used on food-use herbs.

The labels for mint include: Trifluralin (Trifluralin 4EC), Sethoxydim (Poast), Bromoxynil (Buctril, several labels), Bentazon (Basagran), and Paraquat (Gramoxone Extra). Sage, rosemary, and nasturtiums have ornamental use labels.

According to Edith Lurvey (IR-4 Headquarters) the basic problem stems from the fact that the two representative commodities in the herb group, basil and chives, are botanically very different and a pest control substance effective in one of the crops may well injure the other. She sets as an example the fact that IR-4 has received seventeen requests for the use of Napropamide (Devrinol) in/on eleven different herbs, including basil and chives. Napropamide has been demonstrated to be safe and effective in basil production, as well as a number of other herbs. However, the chives project was canceled due to crop injury, precluding the use of the crop group. EPA requires a minimum of three field trials per commodity. This represents at least 33 field trials to obtain tolerances for all requests instead of six.

She has proposed a possible solution to this dilemma. A number of the most commonly used herbs, including basil, marjoram, oregano, sage, thyme and rosemary, are members of the mint family Lamiaceae (Labiatae). Given the botanical similarity and comparable production practices of the herbs in this family, she proposed one possible solution to the "incompatibility" of the two representative crops would be to establish a crop definition for the Lamiaceae herbs. A crop definition using basil as the representative crop to cover all the other Lamiaceae herbs including mint oil crops, would greatly reduce the workload. For example, 14 of the 40 herbs listed in 40CFR 180.41 (19) (A) and 7 of the eleven IR-4 napropamide/herb requests are Lamiaceae herbs. Therefore, the use of a basil crop definition could possibly reduce the number of field trials needed to register napropamide on the Lamiaceae herbs from 21 to three, and the work has already been completed.

A number of the herbs not in the Lamiaceae family are members of the Apiaceae (Umbilliferae) or Asteraceae (Compositae). This opens the possibility of additional herb crop definitions along family lines.
EPA has requested detailed production/harvesting information before considering this new scheme. Initial reluctance from California herb growers has slowed the process. Hopefully, with some help from Florida growers, when asked, we can move the process along.

The National priority setting workshop for IR-4 1998 projects will be held the middle of October. Any requests for herbicide on herbs or other commodities should be sent/called to me before then.

(Parts extracted from IR-4 Newsletter Vol 28 No. 1)  
(Stall, Vegetarian 97-09)

IV. VEGETABLE GARDENING

A. Sweet Onions in the Florida Garden.

Many home gardeners are partial to growing large bulbing onions that are so sweet they can be eaten like an orange or an apple. This “sweetness” is characteristic of certain onion varieties low in strongly pungent sulfur compounds.

In the mid-seventies, commercial onion growers in the vicinity of Vidalia, Georgia started a marketing campaign to sell their sweet onions as ‘Vidalia’ onions. The strategy was so successful that ‘Vidalia’ became a household word throughout America, and created a 6000-acre industry in this 30 square mile area. To protect the integrity of this product and to thwart outsiders who attempted to profit from use of the word ‘Vidalia’, the Georgia legislature trade-marked the name and established certain mandatory guidelines for their industry. To be sold as a true ‘Vidalia’, the onion must be grown in the Vidalia area, and the variety must conform to the Yellow Granex-type. Today, a selected strain called ‘Granex 33’ best typifies this type. The mature bulb is broader at the shoulder than at the base, and wider than it is long.

The Granex varieties, both yellow and white, along with Texas Grano 502, were old short-day varieties that tested well in Florida trials. The Granex 33 has been the standard variety in our state for many years, both on farms and in gardens. The fact that these onions were mild made them even more popular.

Thus, it is no surprise that we have seen the emergence of a Florida-based industry growing and marketing its own version of the Vidalia-type sweet onions. Here, these onions are marketed under the trade-marked name of ‘St. Augustine Sweet’. That name was adopted by the growers because much of the early research and testing on onions was done in the Hastings area near the famous old city of St. Augustine. This testing and grower experience with sweet onions showed that Florida onions could match the quality of the popular Vidalias. Therefore, it appears that the two marketing groups are touting a similar product, grown in separate areas of the country.

‘Granex 33’ remains one of the varieties that Florida growers may rely upon as a ‘St. Augustine Sweet’. However, it appears that a better variety in terms of yield might be one called ‘Sweet Dixie’. Other similar varieties will continue to be tested and included on the list of those that may be grown and marketed as ‘St. Augustine Sweet’. Florida home gardeners wishing to grow a sweet bulbing onion should try to find seed or plants of the varieties grown by either of these two industries. For most gardeners, the ‘Granex 33’ variety will be the easiest to find. Since sulfur contributes to the pungency of onions, home gardeners should be advised to avoid the application of sulfur to the soil or plants. By selecting a proper short-day variety, planting it in the fall (no later than mid-Dec), and with proper fertilization, good quality sweet onions should be
be expected by early to mid-April. And gardeners don't have to live around St. Augustine to do it. They can grow their own versions, such as 'Hardee Honeys', 'Luscious Volusias', or 'Seminole Sweeties'. And if they don't care to grow their own, tell 'em to pick up a bag of 'St. Augustine Sweets'.

(Stephens, Vegetarian 97-09)