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I. NOTES OF INTEREST

A. Vegetable Crops Calendar.


II. COMMERCIAL VEGETABLES

A. Post-Freeze Pepper Mowing.

That peppers (and eggplant) will resprout when mowed and set more fruit is common knowledge among growers. In fact, growers in some southern states regularly mow the spring pepper crop as the market moves north, readying those plants for fall production. However, a quick review of the literature reveals virtually no information exists on this practice. A few (old) papers are available on "clipping" leggy tomato transplants as are several on fruit tree pruning. But, apparently no work has been done on mowing of freeze damaged vegetables.

The freezes of '96 gave south FL growers a perfect opportunity to test the mowing technique. Almost all stages of the crop were in the field at the time of the February freezes, from transplants to plants that had been picked several times. Working together with Silver Strand Farms of Immokalee, 13 week old, freeze damaged, 'Enterprise' bell pepper stands, were either not mowed, or mowed to 3 or 6 inches above the plastic with a conventional rotary mower. These mowing treatments removed all dead or freeze damaged tissue. As winter pepper is compact in growth, being generally less than 20 inches in height, other local growers mowed less severely, removing only 3 - 6 inches of top growth, leaving 14 - 17 inch plants.

We stretched the statistical limits of some of this data to "see" differences. The major impact of mowing appeared at first pick, which was approximately 8 weeks after mowing. The data of Table 1 include Fancy (almost none), U.S. #1, and U.S. #2 fruit and are expressed as yield from 20 plants. Unmowed pepper plants and those mowed to 6 inches above the plastic yielded more total and marketable fruit (by weight) than the pepper mowed to 3" above the plastic. This may have been the result of prepfreeze fruit which was otherwise removed with the 3" mowing, or the unmowed and 6" mowing treatment plants may have had more potential flower sites, which resulted in more fruit at first harvest.

The unmowed pepper had more culls than either of the mowing treatments. Most of the culls were the result of "buttons" or misshapen fruit resulting from improper expansion due to cold weather. Therefore, some mowing seemed appropriate this year as more potential culls were removed in the process. Average fruit weight reflected the relationship between the amount of foliage and fruit sizing. The unmowed plants had the most intact foliage and hence produced a heavier pepper than plants mowed to 3 inches. Mowing to 6" however did not drastically reduce individual fruit weight.

These data show that if growers elect to mow pepper (to remove dead tissue, to lessen disease potential, cosmetics) after a freeze they can do so with good conscience provided they do not mow excessively. The fact that the majority of the pepper harvested in this trial was U.S. #1 and #2 instead of Fancy, may have been the result of plant age (>20 weeks). More indepth trials are planned for winter '97 (real or induced) so stay tuned.
Table 1. Influence of post-freeze clipping of pepper plants on yield and quality after 1st harvest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Total fruit (#)</th>
<th>(wt)</th>
<th>Marketable Fruit (#)</th>
<th>(wt)</th>
<th>Cull Fruit (#)</th>
<th>(wt)</th>
<th>Fr. wt. (oz)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No mow</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>29.7 a</td>
<td>No mow</td>
<td>48 ab</td>
<td>13.5 a</td>
<td>87 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mow to 6&quot;</td>
<td>105 ab</td>
<td>23.4 a</td>
<td>59 ab</td>
<td>15.1 a</td>
<td>46 b</td>
<td>8.3 b</td>
<td>4.1 ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mow to 3&quot;</td>
<td>65 b</td>
<td>11.4 b</td>
<td>25 b</td>
<td>5.6 b</td>
<td>41 b</td>
<td>5.8 b</td>
<td>3.7 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD0.05</td>
<td>60*</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>40*</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Vavrina, Vegetarian 96-05)

III. VEGETABLE GARDENING

A. Southern Pea Classification.

Probably no other vegetable crop is surrounded by more confusion in classification and varietal nomenclature than the southern pea. Even the name of the vegetable itself has a mixture of synonyms. Southern pea is the preferred name now, but many still refer to this vegetable as cowpea, edible cowpea, field pea, blackeye, and table pea. The scientific name is Vigna unguiculata (L.) Walp., which used to be 'Vigna sinensis'.

Vigna contains about 200 species, many of which are called "beans" (mung, adzuki, yard-long beans), while only a few are dubbed "peas" (cowpea). Most common beans (pole, lima, snap) belong to the genus Phaseolus. Vigna differs from Phaseolus in a number of characteristic ways, such as having stipules (paired vestigial leaves at the base of the true leaves). However, Vigna is more closely related to Phaseolus than to Pisum, which contains what we ordinarily think of as peas (English and snow). (Note: Pesticides labeled for "beans" may be legally used on Southern peas.)

Further complicating the issue are the many other members of the legume family, called Fabaceae (or Leguminoseae). Some of these are: Arachis (ground nut); Cajanus (pigeon pea); Canavalia (jack bean); Cicer (chick pea); Cyamopsis (cluster bean); Glycine (soybean); Lablab (hyacinth bean); Lathyrus (chickling pea); Lens (lentil) Mucuna (velvet bean); Pachyrhizus (yam bean); Psophocarpus (winged bean); and Vicia (broad bean). Note that some members of these genera are referred to as "beans", while others are called "peas".

Back to our subject, the Southern pea. There are many named varieties (cultivars) as
well as many unnamed strains of this excellent human food legume. Part of the confusion in knowing precisely which of these varieties or strains one might have is due to the many growers saving their own seed. Once true varietal identity becomes lost, and a new local name is given no one knows for sure what it is. As the seeds are spread around, even names are given to what started out as one variety. What might have been called “Georgia Peach” in that state now becomes “Florida Cream” down here, and so on.

Some years ago, over 50 of these actual varieties and strains were identified. Through testing, each one was shown to be a little different from the others. Since then, many other varieties have been added to the list through the efforts of plant breeders around the country, particularly in the south. The 1987 edition of the Garden Seed Inventory, a survey of the offerings of the seed industry, lists 84 varieties.

The following groupings are offered to provide the gardener with a way to classify more closely his unknown seed-stock.

With the exception of the Purple Hull Group and the Long Pod Group, the classification is based mostly on color of the seed and seed-eye, and the closeness of spacing of seeds in the pod. Many of these names are synonymous.

Varieties with seeds that are so closely spaced that the seed ends are pressed against each other are called Crowders. Each seed has slightly blunted ends from this compression. Seed color varies, but is either concentrated around the seed-eye (hilum) or is general all over the seed coat. Any amount of seed color causes darkening of the “pot-liquor” and the cooked seeds. Those varieties having no color are called Creams. Most of the cream peas are loosely spaced, and are called “conch” peas. However, cream crowder varieties are available (example ‘Zipper Cream’). The Purple Hull Group includes those having some purple coloring on their pods, even though they may fit into another grouping due to other characteristics.

Further confusing the issue is the plant growth habit, there being bush, vining, and semi-vining habit. These groupings will not deal with plant habit.

1. **Blackeye Group**
The seeds are not crowded in the pods. They are white with dark black eyes. 
*Examples*: Ramshorn Blackeye, California Blackeye #5, Giant Ramshorn, Extra Early Blackeye, Blackeye Crowder, Queen Anne, and Royal Blackeye.

2. **Blackeye Crowder Group**
Similar to regular blackeyes, except the seeds are crowded in the pods. 
*Examples*: Alacrowder.

3. **Colored-eye Group**
This group has seed-eye coloring other than black. Usually it is brown, tan or pink. Seeds not crowded. *Examples*: Alalong (Longhorn), Todd, Alabunch, Big Boy, Texas Big Boy, and Royal Pink Eye.

4. **Colored-eye Crowder Group**
Same as above, except seeds are crowded in pods. Includes Red “Holstein eye” pattern. *Examples*: Pinkeye Crowder, Browneye Crowder, White Pinkeye, Calico (Hereford), and Alabrowneye.
5. **Black Crowder Group**
The seeds are solid black when dry, purple when immature. Seed most always crowded. **Examples**: Black Crowder.

6. **Brown Crowder Group**
Most crowders fit into this group, and most all brown seeds fit here. Some seeds are tan colored with only slightly darker eyes. **Examples**: Brown Crowder, Sugar Crowder, Silverskin Crowder, Alabama Crowder (not the same as Alacrowder), Mississippi Silverbrown, Jackson 21, Dixie-Lee, Producer, Calhoun Crowder, and Colossus.

7. **Speckle Crowder Group**
Speckled blue seeds are moderately crowded in pods. Have largest seeds of the southern peas. **Examples**: Blue Goose (Gray Goose), Whittle, Speckled Java, Gray Crowder, and Taylor.

8. **Cream Group (Conch)**
Seeds are light green or white, and relatively small. Cooking water comes out bright and clear. Since most creams are uncrowded, most fit into this group. **Examples**: Floricream, Sadandy, Cabbage (Bush White Acre), Running Acre (Running Conch), Topset, Snapea, Climax, Bush Conch, White Acre, Terrace, Gentlemen, Texas Creams (40, 8, 12 others), Elite, Freezegreen, Mississippi Cream and Royal Cream.

9. **Cream Crowder Group**
Uncolored seeds, but crowded in pods. **Examples**: Lady Cream, Lady Finger (Rice or Catjang), White Sugar Crowder (actually, have a colored eye so would fit the colored eye crowder group), Zipper Cream (also called Zipper Peas), Mississippi Silver, and Royal Cream Crowder.

10. **Purple Hull Group**
Seed pods show some purple coloring, either at tip or are all over. Seeds may or may not be crowded. Usually white peas with buff, brown or pink eyes. **Examples**: Jackson Purple Hull, Dixie Queen, Herkken, Knuckle Purple Hull, Pinkeye Purple Hull, Purple Tip Crowder, Purple Hull, Big Boy Purple Hull, Coronet, and Crimson.

11. **Field and Forage Group**
This group includes all those grown most usually for forage cropping and soil improvement. However, they make O.K. table fare. **Examples**: Iron, Clay, Whipporwill, New Era, Groit, Brabham, Victor, Arlington, Red Ripper, Columbia, Michigan Favorite, Chinese Red Pea, Coronet, and Tetapeche Gray.

12. **Long Pod Group**
This group is characterized by having extra-long pods. Length ranges from over 10 inches up to 36 inches. An example of a 10-inch variety is ‘Snappea’ developed by Al Lorz in Florida. The long one is the yard-long variety, called Yard-long Bean (Vigna unguiculata subspecies sesquipedalis (L.) Verde. Its unusually long pods are borne on trailing, climbing vines reaching 9-12 feet in length, requiring trellising. The pods are snapped instead of being shelled.

(Stephens, Vegetarian 96-05)
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