



Garden Tips & Techniques: Favorite Veggie Varieties

Last year we provided you with a **list of crops** that we've found to grow well in urban conditions. This year, we'd like to highlight some of those crops that have proven to be workhorses on our production sites. And we'd also like to let you in on some of the new varieties that have won us over.

Crops Worth Highlighting

Every year, the weather, soil conditions, and pest and disease prevalence affect our growing and yields. These crops have stood the test of time – and lots of challenges in the ever-changing conditions on our urban growing sites.

- *Blue Lake Pole Beans*, High Mowing Organic Seeds: These tender and full-flavored green beans produce well. They are uniform in size and shape and fairly easy to pull from the plants.
- *Yaya Carrots*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: These medium-length, tasty carrots have proven themselves year after year in the challenging soils conditions at Braddock Farms.



Yaya carrots, photo from Johnny's Seeds.

- *Nufar Basil*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: We like this hardy type of basil for our greenhouse growing, as it stands up to high heat and has a ton of disease resistance. It has a traditional basil flavor.
- *Lacinato (sometimes called Tuscano) Kale*, High Mowing Organic Seeds: We consider Lacinato kale to be the best-tasting variety that we grow. Its beautiful bluish green color and interesting shape and texture are appealing in the garden, though it is less productive overall than curly kale.



Lacinato kale, photo from [Johnny's Seeds](#).

- *Encore Lettuce Mix*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: This mix of varieties, intended for cutting as baby lettuce, includes lots of red types and some great textures. It has performed well for us in the greenhouse and outside.
- *Guardsmark Scallions*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: These green onions grow consistently and quickly. It's a reliable variety that we return to every year.
- *Raven Zucchini*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: This dark green zucchini is beautiful as well as productive. It's our standard variety for tasty, uniform zucchini.



Raven zucchini, photo from [Johnny's Seeds](#).

New Crops We Love

Every year we trial several crops, and preliminary results are in! These varieties haven't yet had a chance to prove themselves over time, but we love them so far.

- *Bronco Bush Beans*, High Mowing Organic Seeds: These beans taste great and they are super productive. They do tend to produce all at once, so plan successions accordingly. We're growing these as our standard bush bean in 2014.
- *Mei Quing Choi Pac Choi*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: This pac choi grows very quickly and produces beautiful, tender, uniform heads. So far we love it.



Mei Quing Choi Pac Choi, photo from [Johnny's Seeds](#).

- *Skyphos Lettuce*, Fedco Seeds: Looking for a beautiful, lush head of lettuce? Look no further. This variety reliably produced large heads of silky red butterhead lettuce with bright green interiors. Gorgeous!



Skyphos lettuce, photo from [Johnny's Seeds](#).

- *Mellow Star Shishito Peppers*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: For the adventuresome cook, these little frying peppers are predominantly mild, though occasionally one will pack a fiery punch! Prolific peppers on a compact plant.
- *Des Vertus Mareau Turnip*, High Mowing Organic Seeds: This French variety reminds us of the small, sweet salad turnips we grow, but in a larger size. Mild enough to eat raw, with larger greens than our other salad turnips.
- *Sakura Cherry Tomato*, Johnny's Selected Seeds: We've grown this variety in the greenhouse and outside, and results have been good so far. Somewhat spindly plant growth leads to productive, tasty tomatoes. We'll grow them again next year!



Sakura cherry tomatoes, photo from [Johnny's Seeds](#).

What are your favorite crop varieties? We'd love to hear what you plant, harvest, and devour year after year. Comment on our Facebook post or just send us an email at info@growpittsburgh.org.