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November 2015 Newsletter

New Vegetable Cultivars

Welcome to www.vegetableseeds.net.au newsletter November 2105.

As promised we are now ready after a few years work at the Cressy Research station Tasmania to introduce some new vegetable cultivars.

These are the first of several to be placed in our 2016 catalogue. As readers of this newsletter we think it fair that you are the first to get this information.

If you would like to order these seeds there will be a special introductory offer for readers of this newsletter at the bottom of the article.

The following article is written by Bob Reid, enjoy.

Hi David,

I thought I might share with you my experience with three new additions to my garden. As you know I have been interested in South American vegetables for some time and a few years ago I managed to acquire seed from two vines that are closely related to cucumbers.

They are known by many names ; Achocha, Caigua, Korila and botanically as *Cyclanthera brachyastacha* (Fat Baby) and *C. pedal* (Giant Bolivian Achocha).

Both vines originate in the sub-tropical slopes of the Andes in South America and I remember eating the fruits when I was working in that part of the world.

Knowing something about where they came from, I was at first a little apprehensive as how they would perform in my garden at Devon Hills (not exactly the warmest place in the State).

Planted directly into the soil in mid November underneath a firm trellis about 2m high. I treated them pretty much as I would climbing beans. They grew somewhat slowly at first and I was beginning to think I was pushing my luck.

Then in mid- December they "took off" and by the end of January, not only was I starting to harvest the fruit, I was wishing I had built an even bigger trellis. The vines fruited until well into May when the first serious frost burnt the foliage stone dead!

They fruited so abundantly that I had fruit to give away to all the neighbours, and after explaining to them how to cook them, received very favourable reports.



Fat Baby is a small rounded fruit about 3-4 long with soft spines.

The whole fruit is edible and can be eaten raw or cooked. It is hollow and only needs the seeds to removed.

Giant Bolivian Achocha has a cucumber shaped fruit about 12-14cm long and is also hollow.



When stuffed, particularly with savoury items, and baked it tastes like mild green fried peppers. A perfect plant for the imaginative cook!!

I was surprised about 3 years ago when I was contacted by a King Island farmer asking me about a Brassica that he had received from Christmas Island.

I was taken aback as the island I knew under that name was very, very tropical and almost certainly not suitable for growing a cabbage.

It turned out the island was a very small one off the NW end of King Island and was once the home of a Chinese gardener.

Abandoned after WW1 the gardens fell into a wasteland with the exception of a Brassica species that continued to self-sow over the years even in such a windswept and poor soil situation.

Seed was at first saved by a lady who grew it in her garden for many years before being passed on to my farmer friend.

Totally intrigued I planted 30 plants at the Cressy Research Station. It turned out that the plant is actually a Collard, a Brassica that is widely used in many countries as a 12-month supplier of highly edible green leaves.

Google it and you will be surprised as to how healthy and productive it is. It is a great find and one that will be planted every year in my garden.

Enjoy your garden,
Bob



Special introductory offer for readers of this newsletter valid until end December 2015

Please email us if you would like to accept the offer.

King Island kale \$1 for 30 seeds

Achocha Fat Baby \$2 for 10 seeds

Achocha Bolivian Giant \$2 for 5 seeds

Some photos of our vegetable display gardens at Inspirations. The sweet green cabbages are ready for harvest, the broccoli and Broccollette just keep producing.

The peas are all producing now and the garlic and potato onions are nearly ready for harvest.

The sweet red onions are forming bulbs nicely and the lettuce icebergs ready for harvest.

Happy gardening wherever you may be.

