



Political caricature 1824

Welcome to vegetableseeds.net.au

November/December 2014 Newsletter

We've all been busy in the garden, weeding, watering, planting and harvesting. At our garden centre we have had a very busy year and this will be the last newsletter of this year so we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thank you all so much for your continued support.

This newsletter is about a pumpkin trial I did in 2010-11. In the Northern Hemisphere they are called winter squash. Pumpkins there refer to those Halloween types, except for the sweet sugar ones used in dessert pies where the seeds can be eaten too.

You can do similar experiments to this, it is worth the effort. The varieties I selected from this trial are in our [web catalogue](#).

A fair trial

The first question to ask before starting any grow out trial is *'What are we looking for?'* It could be high yield, taste, size of fruit or plant, disease resistance, storage possibilities, fresh market produce, early mid or late producers and many other reasons.

From our viewpoint without a trial we would not know what we are selling you. When we do a trial we have to be very open minded and not opinionated. Some varieties that we thought would not perform well may surprise us and so confront our prejudices.

What we were looking for

The following were the varieties I selected. I sourced them from all over the world from different seed suppliers. I was looking for early, productive and very tasty varieties that would store well so the home gardener would be able to prepare excellent meals with this produce throughout the year.

I was interested in the size of plant and whether it was a large trailing, semi-trailing or bush type to suit every size of garden. I was also looking for disease resistance.

The plants were to be grown in Relbia in Tasmania. You may have grown some or all of the following.

The candidates

Cucurbita maxima: Sweet grey, 'Sampson', Musque de provence, Buttercup, Bon Bon, Crown Prince, Orange Hubbard, Blue Ballet, Small Sugar, Honey Bear.

Cucurbita pepo: Acorn 'Autumn Delight', Harlequin, Sweet Dumpling, Red Kuri, Uchiki Kuri, Table Gold, Orange Cuties.

Cucurbita moschata: Cob Nut, Butternuts Hercules, Hawk, Harrier and Hunter.

Are they fit?

The first step was to test the germination of all the seeds so I placed 10 seeds in a petri dish with moist tissue paper on a heat mat set at 25° C. If pumpkin seeds germinate within 5 days it is very strong seed.

The results are useful to me because when I purchase seeds I want to know that the seeds will be strong.

We do the same tests on all the varieties we grow, four times a year.



Did they pass?

Buttercup Bon Bon 3 days
Buttercup 4 days
Small Sugar 7 days
Table Gold 7 days
Honey Bear 3 days
Autumn Delight (Acorn Squash) 7 days
Blue Ballet 4 days
Harlequin 10 days; only 2 seeds germinated
Red Kuri 7 days
Uchiki Kuri 10 days; only 3 seeds germinated
Sweet Dumpling 10 days
Orange Cuties 4 days
Musque de Provence 7 days; only 5 seeds germinated
Crown Prince 4 days
Cob Nut 3 days
Butternut Hercules 4 days
Butternut Hawk 4 days
Butternut Harrier 4 days
Butternut Hunter 4 days
Sweet Grey 6 days
Sampson 3 days
Orange Hubbard 5 days



The scene

Relbia, Tasmania. We have late springs which means it is not safe to plant out pumpkin plants or sow them until about the first or second week of November when the soils warm up.

Even then we can get cooler nights and late frosts so we have to put old flower pots over them in the evenings if a frost is expected.

It generally starts to get colder mid-March. Your gardens may be different but the results of this trial will still be relevant.

I dug over an area 10m by 10m in the autumn of 2010, adding mushroom compost and 10 lt of COF. In late spring I removed all weeds and raked the area level.



On the first week of November I sowed ten seeds, two to a hole of each variety, about 0.5m apart. I know this is close spacing but I didn't have a lot of space to put in all the varieties I wanted to trial in one year.

The trial

	26/10/10	14/12/10	22/12/10	1/1/11	5/2/11	1/3/11
Small Sugar Pumpkin	6 plants 3 leaves per plant no flowers	6 more buds per plant. 12cm vines	Many flowers. 1.2m vines	1 fruit per plant. Many flws.	3 fruit per plant orange	Fruit maturing Early.
Buttercup Bon Bon (supplier 1)	4 plants. 4 flowers per plant.	8 buds. No fruit. Trailing	10 flws. 1.2m vines.	3 fruit per plant. 1.2m vines.	3 fruits 1.2m vines	18cm green fruit. Early
Buttercup Bon Bon (supplier 2)	4 plants. 3 leaves.	8 buds	10 flws. 40cm vines.	As above	Not as good as above	18cm green fruit
Buttercup	6 plants. 2 leaves.	4 buds. Small round fruit. Trailing.	5 more flws. 1 fruit per plant growing	Nothing to record	3 fruit per plant.	18cm green fruit.
Table Gold	2 small plants. 2 leaves	6 small buds no fruit.	2 small fruit per plant.	Many flws. A bush type.	2x5cm golden fruit.	3x9cm fruit per plant.
Honey Bear	4 plants. No flws.	Many flws. 2 fruit forming.	Fruit growing, strong plants.	Bush type. Several fruit.	Round fruit 8cm.	Orange 10cm fruit. Early
Acorn Autumn Delight	4 small plants.	3 buds each plant.	Nothing to record	4 fruit per plant.	10cm dark green ribbed fruit	3 fruit per plant. Acorn shaped. Early.
Blue Ballet	4 plants 4 leaves	5 buds. 1 small fruit.	10 flws.	2x8cm fruit. Trailing	1 pale green large fruit.	Only one fruit, the other died.
Harlequin	4 plants. Not uniform	2 green/yellow fruit per bush.	4 fruit per bush	Lots of 10cm fruit	Acorn shaped striped fruit	Very early
Red Kuri	4 plants 5cm tall.	9 buds. 24cm vines.	3 small yellow fruit	1.2m vines.	1.5m vines. Red fruit	Very early
Uchiki Kuri	As above	6 buds. 12cm vines	10 flws. No fruit.	1 fruit.	Similar to above. More a bush	Orange. Not as early as above.
Orange Hubbard	4 weak plants. No flws.	5 buds. No flws.	15 flws. Trailing.	Not recorded	2 orange fruit.	Not as early as above
Sweet Dumpling	4 plants. 3cm tall.	8 very small buds.	12 flws. No fruit.	1x5cm ribbed green fruit.	2 fruit per plant	As on 5/2/11
Orange Cuties	5 strong plants	8 buds. 1 sml fruit	1 fruit 12 flws.	3 orange fruit.	5 orange fruit.	Very early
Musque de Provence	4 strong plants.	Trailing. 3 small buds.	Very vigorous.	1x5cm green fruit.	1x10cm green fruit.	Very vigorous but late.
Crown Prince	4x6cm plants	10 buds. 1 flw.	9 flws.	Not recorded	2 large fruit like sweet grey.	A late variety
Cob Nut Butternut	5x4cm plants.	Not recorded	3 flws per bush.	1 fruit per plant.	Not recorded	A late variety.
Hercules	As above	As above	5 small flws.	4x8cm fruit. Bush	15cmx7.5cm fruit.	3 per plant.
Butternut Hawk	5x3cm plants	6 small buds	3 flws.	1x8cm fruit	Not recorded	3 per plant
Butternut Harrier	5x3cm plants.	3x1cm fruit	As before but fruit growing.	3x8cm fruit	More flws.	Several fruit. Very early.
Butternut Hunter	As above	5 buds. 1x1cm fruit.	As before	3x8cm fruit	2 more fruit.	Early variety.
Sweet Grey	4x12cm plants.	2.5m vines. 12flws. 1 bud.	2 fruit on 3m vines.	As before.	6 large fruit. 6m vines.	Early variety.
Sweet Grey 'Sampson'	4x8m plants.	8 buds. 1.2m vines	3m vines.	2 fruit per vine	4 fruit per vine	Mid season.

Trailing or bush?



Vigorous Long trailing: Sweet Grey, and Sweet Grey 'Sampson'. Suitable large areas 2m by 2m or more.

Trailing: Musque de Provence, Buttercup, Orange Hubbard, Red Kuri, Orange Cuties. Suitable 2m by 1m beds.

Semi- trailing/almost bush: Buttercup Bon Bon, Harlequin, Blue Ballet, Small Sugar, Uchiki Kuri, Harlequin, Butternut Hunter. Suitable 2m by 1m beds.

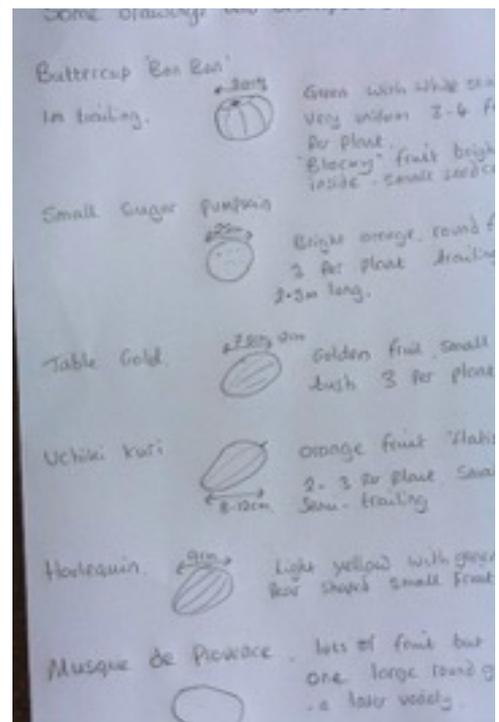
Bush: Table Gold, Sweet Dumpling, Acorn Autumn Delight, Honey Bear, Butternut Hercules, Butternut Hawk, Butternut Harrier, Cob Nut. Suitable 1m by 1m beds.

Early, mid or late

Early: Butternut Harrier, Butternut Hunter, Sweet Grey, Orange Cuties, Buttercup Bon Bon, Small Sugar, Honey Bear, Red Kuri, Uchiki Kuri, Harlequin, Autumn Delight.

Mid- season: Buttercup, Orange Hubbard, Table Gold, Cob Nut, Butternut Hawk, Sweet Dumpling, Sweet Grey 'Sampson', Butternut Hercules.

Late: Musque de Provence, Crown Prince, Blue Ballet.





Flavour

All of these pumpkins we selected for www.vegetableseeds.net.au have dense flesh and small seed cavities. They all taste superb and are used in many different ways in cooking. I am sure there are many recipes for all those named on the web.

In our catalogue we may refer to individual varieties like Butternut F1 or Buttercup F1, this is because the names change so often, but our trials always offer the best and latest selections. Since this time we have trialled many, many more.

This is basically how all varieties are tested in the commercial world for us to buy in the shops, take home and eat. Most people would never think there was this much work in selecting a bunch of veggies, but there is.

One more note, because we grow out everything we sell you, we noted this year that our beautiful brown onion was not! It turned out to be a red one.

I have contacted our supplier, we all make mistakes and in the grand scheme of things this is a small error, but if you have had the same experience and have been disappointed, please let me know.

Happy Gardening (and Happy Christmas) wherever you may be.

