2019 Vegetable Variety Trial Gardens Question & Answer

-New York State, New York Seeds-

The Vegetable Variety Trial Garden project (VVTG) is for Cornell Cooperative Extension programs around NYS who are cultivating vegetable demonstration gardens.

The 2019 theme “New Your State, New York Seeds” will focus on varieties grown by Fruition Seed Company that are organic and regionally adapted.

The garden signage will include information about the varieties as well as cultural practices to reduce plant disease and should be displayed by all beds that you register to grow. In addition to growing the vegetables, your site should demonstrate the cultural practices described on the signage.

This project is beneficial to gardeners to determine what varieties work best in certain areas and is a great education tool. It opens up opportunity to show/demonstrate your efforts to folks who are interested in becoming gardeners or experienced gardeners who are interested in new varieties to grow.

Participating CCE programs receive:

- A garden design plan, timeline, checklist, and interpretive signage templates for their VVTG beds.
- A template for your Local Program Plan of Work.
- Seeds and transplants for the 2019 season.
- Support and guidance.

Participating CCE programs:

- Plant, maintain, harvest and report on their experience with each type of vegetable/edible.
- Can choose to grow all 9 beds or can select one of the 4 bed designs along with the pollinator bed.
- Enter variety data into the Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners web forum.
- Share photos depicting progress of their VVTG projects throughout the growing season.
- Complete a mid-season progress report and post VVT survey.

To help you be informed about this project, we are including some of the questions we have had in the past in the Q&A section below.
VVT Question & Answer:

Q: Where do I find information on this project including Project Timeline Checklist, POW template, Recommended Site Prep and other forms?

A: Information, forms, and webinar recordings can be found at: http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/vvttg/ There will be a VVT timeline/checklist and a list of which vegetable varieties to enter into the database to guide you/volunteers.

Q: If volunteers working on the VVT project have questions who should they ask?

A: Volunteers should work through the CCE staff member (listed as the Primary Contact on the registration form) to have their questions answered. If CCE staff can’t answer the question then they can contact Laurie at ljv8@cornell.edu

Q: Will there be educational signage for the beds we select?

A: Yes, you will be able to download and print the signage for your bed selections. We recommend laminating them or enclosing them in some other form of weatherproof material.

Q: Do we have to plant all 9 beds?

A: We encourage you to plant all 9 beds (Design 1) but if your program/volunteers or space can’t support all 9 then you may decide to select one of the two 5 bed designs.

Q: If we don’t have room for the beds near our county office building can we plant at other sites?

A: Yes. Some counties in past years have maintained VVT beds located at community gardens.

Q: Do we have to use all of the seeds/plants provided?

A: No. You don’t have to plant all of the seeds/plants, but you should follow the design so your beds contain at least some each type of plant/seed included in the bed design.

You will receive some extra plants/seeds (you may choose to plant them in a different part of the garden or share them).

Q: Do we have to use the 3X3 design?

A: No, but there are instructions for creating the 9-bed design on the VVTG site if you choose to do so.

Q: What is the purpose of the VVT?

A: The data collected is used to help us determine which vegetable varieties will be included in our “Selected List of Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners in NYS”. The trials also demonstrate features of an ecological garden (cover crops, companion planting, mulching, attracting beneficials, etc).
Q: Who enters data into the VVFG web forum and what type of data is required?

A: Either CCE staff or a volunteer. We will hold a webinar to explain how to enter data. There is also a recorded webinar on the VVT webpage to view as a refresher or if you are unable to participate in the 2019 webinar.

The data required includes information similar to what would be collected in grower field trials and uses a 1-5 star rating for the following 4 categories: Overall, Taste, Yield, Ease. There is also an area for adding any details you would like to include about the variety but this is not required.

Q: What happens if we don’t enter variety data into the VVFG web forum?

A: All sites are required to provide input on the vegetables they trial.

If you have additional questions please contact Laurie VanNostrand, ljv8@cornell.edu

Enrollment period opens December 3rd and closes December 21st. Visit our website for more information: http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/vtg/.