

Nifty Way To Plant Garden Seeds

The “Sow Perfect Seeder” is a precision seeding tool that lets you plant anywhere from 6 to 9 seeds at a time while spacing them 1 1/2 to 2 in. apart. It makes thinning unnecessary and also works great to plant small seeds into trays for starting plants indoors.

Made from UV-hardened ABS plastic, the system consists of a 15-in. long, 4-in. wide seed tray with a channel running down the center and a set of three 18-in. long, 1 1/2-in. wide paddles that fit flat into the channel in the seed tray. The paddles each have series of evenly spaced holes on both sides.

You select a paddle to put into the channel on the seed tray. Then pour seeds onto whichever side of the tray you want to use and tip the tray to shift seeds onto the paddle until there's one seed in each hole. Then remove the paddle from the tray, and turn it upside down over the furrow or flat to dump the seeds out.

When you're done planting, just remove the paddle, shift the seed to the center of the tray, and pour it back into the packet or other container for future use.

The 3 paddles each have different size holes for different sizes of seed. There are hole choices for seed on both sides of the paddle, giving you 12 different planting options.

“The Sow Perfect Seeder lets you space seeds evenly for better growth, and saves work by eliminating the need to do any thinning. It works fast and makes planting a lot of fun,” says inventor Kirk Neetz. “It doesn't waste seed, and has no moving parts that can break, rust or corrode. We introduced the seeder last summer and customers have already used it to plant more than 50 different varieties of seeds.

“It works on almost any kind of seed, from the largest peas to almost dust-like portulaca flower seed that's near microscopic in size.



Paddles fit into channel down center of seed tray (top). Seeds are then poured into tray to fill holes in paddle. Then paddle is removed and tipped over garden furrow.

“You can plant anywhere from 6 to 9 seeds at a time, depending on the paddle you use. Paddles with 6 holes are primarily designed to plant into a 72 or 126-cell tray when starting seed indoors. Paddles with 7 or 9 holes work great to plant onion, radish, beet seeds and so forth directly into a garden.”

You can watch a video of the Sow Perfect

Seeder on the company's website or by searching for “migidener” on Youtube.

It sells for \$18.75 plus \$8 S&H. Add \$12 S&H for 2 seeders.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sow Perfect Seeder Co., 13160 Fox Lane, Lemont, Ill. 60439 (ph 630 243-1277; www.sowperfectseeder.com).

New Potato Varieties

Before you finalize next year's vegetable garden, check out these unusual varieties of potatoes.

Phil Bakker, at EarthApples in Stony Plain, Alberta, moved there from the Netherlands. He has been raising European variety seed potatoes in western Canada for 25 years. The focus has been on wholesale commercial markets. But individuals kept contacting the company and expressed interest in buying seed potatoes.

Currently 10 varieties that grow well in cold climates are available. That list will grow as new varieties are tested. They are non-GMO, certified seed, and they cover the spectrum of color - white, yellow, purple and red. In their online descriptions, EarthApples includes information about the best way to prepare them.

“Different varieties have nuances,” Bakker explains. “For example, Lady Amarilla produces good french fries. It's one of the varieties used in Belgium for their famous fries.”

EarthApples specialty varieties include baby potatoes such as the early harvest yellow Jazzy, and Rosemarie, a pinkish fingerling-type potato. Others include Little Giant, Cerisa, and Gemson.

The non-typical potatoes appeal to urban container gardeners and to long-time gardeners who want to grow something new alongside traditional favorites. As a bonus, they learn new techniques.

For example, to reduce growing time as much as 3 weeks, Bakker suggests chitting - a European technique. Seed potatoes are left in natural light indoors for a couple of



Purple Magic is one of many specialty varieties of seed potatoes available from Phil Bakker at EarthApples.

weeks before planting. Instead of growing long sprouts like potatoes kept in the dark, they grow short sprouts that turn green and begin to develop minuscule leaves. With more energy in the seed potato, the plants poke through the ground sooner. Another benefit of chitting is that the earlier the potato is ready for harvest, the less likely it is to be affected by blight, which tends to occur later in the season.

Because the seed potatoes are grown in Canada they have northern vigor. They mature faster, which is good for shorter growing seasons. But they also have less disease and stress issues in warmer climates, such as California.

The EarthApples website lists the available varieties and will take orders from customers in Canada and the U.S. Shipments go out beginning in late March/early April.

“This is a great challenge to present new varieties in a fun way and to think outside of the box,” Bakker says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, EarthApples, Phil Bakker, 4 Legend Trail, Stony Plain, Alberta Canada T7Z 0B1.

New Finds From Rare Seeds Catalog

Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co. in Mansfield, Mo., specializes in preserving seeds from the past.

Owner Jere Gettle printed the first Heirloom Seed catalog in 1998, at the age of 17. The company now mails catalogs to more than 700,000 gardeners nationally.

Baker Creek carries one of the largest selections of seeds from the 19th century, including many Asian and European varieties. The company has grown to offer nearly 2,000 varieties of vegetables, flowers and herbs - the largest selection of heirloom varieties in the U.S. Their team of seed explorers visited dozens of countries last year, continually searching for anything endangered and rare.

Request a free color catalog at www.rareseeds.com (ph 417 924-8917).

Here are a few of the rare varieties that caught our eye.

Mammoth Red Mangel Beets

These are huge beets weighing up to 40 lbs. each, with large yields per acre. They were highly used for livestock feed in the 1800's but can also be picked small for table use.



Zucchini Rampicante Squash

An Italian heirloom vining zucchini, it grows very long and produces a long slender 15-in. fruit with a flat bulb at the bottom. Described as one of the best eating summer squash, it's tender, mild and sweet tasting. It's great for baking.

Chinese Red Noodle Bean

This unique Chinese ethnic variety has a maturity date of just 80 days. Baker

Creek describes it as the most stunning and unique bean they've ever offered. It produces deep red, 18-in. pods that are delicious and full of nutrition, and they even keep most



of their color when sautéed. Long vines produce all summer and do well under many conditions. Produces small red seeds.

Brad's Atomic Grape Tomato

This wild-looking tomato produces elongated, large cherries in clusters. Fruits hold well on the vine or off, making this amazing variety a good candidate for market growers.

The fruit's olive green interior is blushed with red when dead-ripe and extraordinarily sweet.

Maiz Morado Or Kulli Corn

The darkest colored corn known, Maiz Morado has a delicious flavor and is believed to have the highest amount of healthy anthocyanins of any corn. Also known as Kulli, it originated in Peru in the Andes Highlands. It has been bred for the past 20 years in New Mexico to adapt to North American latitudes and will grow and produce ears easily in most American gardens, says the company.

This ancient corn is excellent as both a flour corn or picked young, as a flavorful sweet corn. It's also used in South America to brew a special and highly revered drink known as chicha morado.

Baker Creek says they love to make purple corn juice with cinnamon, clove and pineapple - a refreshing elixir bursting with antioxidants. Locals also use it to dye fabrics and cloth, as well as grinding into a beautiful flour/meal. Grows 8 ft. or taller and has a maturity date of about 100 days.

Strawberry Spinach

This curious plant produces greens that are picked and cooked like spinach, but it also produces attractive, mildly-sweet red berries which add a nice touch to fruit salads.

The old-fashioned plant dates back to the 1600's in Europe where it was found in a monastery garden.



Garden Planner Works Like A Slide Rule

Clyde Majerus used his industrial engineering skills to simplify his garden work, and the result is a handy product that any gardener will appreciate.

Majerus invented Clyde's Garden Planner in the 1990's when he was attempting to time his garden workload so it wouldn't interfere with the June birth of his third daughter. The Planner is a slide chart that borrows on “time phasing” from the field of production planning for scheduling materials and parts in manufacturing. Clyde's chart uses a horizontal calendar to show the entire planting, growing and harvest season at a glance.

By knowing the expected first-frost date for a particular geographic location, a gardener can use the Planner to determine planting times for starting seeds indoors and for setting

both plants and seeds outdoors in the garden. It also provides expected harvest dates for 22 commonly grown garden vegetables. The flip side of the Planner provides the same guidelines for planting a fall garden (based on expected first-frost dates in the fall).

The chart also provides gardeners with the quantity of seed to plant per 10-ft. row, planting depths, distance between rows and between plants, sunlight requirements, expected yield per 10-ft. row, and suggested companion plants for each vegetable type.

Majerus sells his Clyde's Garden Planner slide chart online for \$5, which includes shipping. The Garden Planner has a sheet listing expected first-frost and last-frost dates for states/provinces and cities throughout the U.S. and Canada. He also sells a small Clyde's Garden Kit for \$25 and a large one

for \$40. The small Garden Kit contains the slide chart along with 7 packets of vegetable seeds. The large Garden Kit contains 3 slide charts and 12 packets of vegetable seeds.

Majerus says he recently began customizing the Garden Planner slide chart for garden-related organizations and companies to use as a promotional item and as a teaching tool. The chart can be imprinted with a company or organization's logo and contact information.

A smartphone version of the Garden Planner is available for \$2.99.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Clyde Majerus CDM Planning, 23496 Andrew Road, Grovespring, Mo. 65662 (ph 417 589-3117; www.clydesvegetableplantingchart.com).