



Urban Harvest

New Kinds of Seeds Create Anticipation

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Bull's blood beets are among the colorful fall vegetables.

If you are new to vegetable gardening, you likely are searching for seeds to plant. In reality, all of us gardeners are searching for seeds continuously. Some of us are looking to find a kale seed, any kale seed, something to plant, while others seek new varieties of almost every vegetable. We want something new to entice us into the garden every day. And every year, the appreciated folks who carefully grow seeds never fail to introduce varieties that have performed exceptionally well in their trials.

Of course, there are varieties that seasoned gardeners grow every year, because they are exceptional in production, taste, disease, pest-resistance and/or beauty. They excel every year for us. Sometimes we get very attached to those varieties, so attached that when they are

withdrawn from availability, our language may for a short time become off-colored.

Sometimes the seed companies replace a favorite variety with another they claim is better. Sometimes I am grateful, but often I want my tried-and-true variety back.

The good news is there are a lot of varieties from which to choose, so many we have to make choices. And that is when we start to read descriptions of the varieties and try to determine which ones to choose.

First, I read the descriptions in the seed catalogs to determine if that variety is suited for our climate, and whether it has resistance to diseases that occur in our climate and that are prevalent for that vegetable type. I look for words such as productive, potential heavy producer, high yielding, or outstanding productivity.

If I see a new variety I want to try, I grow a little of that variety, while growing more of the variety that has performed well for me over the years.

From having gardened for many years and from having access to many experienced gardeners, I am able to usually make good choices. However, for those who are not as experienced, it is a good idea to learn from others.

There are classes at Urban Harvest that provide that information such as the Fall Vegetable Gardening class that is taught twice each summer, with the next class being Saturday, Sept. 20. Bob Randall's book Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers for Metro Houston lists excellent varieties of every vegetable that can be grown successfully in our area.



Veronica cauliflower is one of the unique fall vegetables.

Another good opportunity is to go to the seed swap at the Eastside Farmers Market, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 13-14, where gardeners bring seeds to swap with each other, and there will be seeds for sale. In addition, local plant nurseries and feed stores carry fresh supplies of seeds that work well in metro Houston.

Nothing beats sitting down with seed catalogs, in hard copy or on the seed company websites, and browsing all they offer. There are a few seed companies from whose catalogs I regularly order, including Johnny's Selected Seeds, [Territorial Seed Co.](#), Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, Tomato Growers Supply Co. and [Kitazawa Seed Co.](#)

This column is sponsored by Urban Harvest. To find out more about community gardens, school gardens, farmers markets and gardening classes, visit www.urbanharvest.org.