

## Gardening with Chuck Programs for January 21 - 27, 2019

### All American Plant Selections

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Many Kansas City Chiefs fans were excited last week to learn that Patrick Mahomes had won a most valuable player award. College athletics name MVPs as well as All Americans. Not to be outdone, we in the plant world, especially ornamentals and vegetables select All American flowers and vegetables every year. These are new cultivars and hybrids that have done well across all or most of the United States. Rigorous testing is done all across the country and the best of the best, if you will, are named. There is a website, search on All-America selections to find it. During the rest of this week I'll talk about some of the vegetable winners - one a day, and next week I'll talk about some of the flowers that were AAS winners. Not all are immediately available to home gardeners though so be patient! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## SilverWave Exotic Melon

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Orange SilverWave is classified as an exotic melon. The outside is going to look odd with a mixture of dark green splotches on a light green background. At 3 to 4 pounds in size it will be similar to a muskmelon. When you cut it open the flesh will be a light orange, reminiscent of a pale muskmelon, and it is in the same genus, but it doesn't look like any muskmelon you've seen before. No ribbing of the rind at all. You can expect up to six fruits per vine and fairly quick to bear. While it has good resistance to a couple of melon diseases it is recommended to grow the vines on a trellis for improved air circulation to reduce leaf diseases. It's also well adapted for growing in large containers like a half whiskey barrel. Oh, the taste is going to be somewhat like a muskmelon and is extremely sweet. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Firefly Tomato

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Tomatoes are THE most popular vegetable grown in America's home gardens. It's no surprise then that three of All-American winners are tomatoes. The first is Firefly. An F1 hybrid it is larger than a currant tomato but not as large as a cherry tomato. It's that just right in between size that'll be perfect for snacking. It has very pale yellow, at times almost white, fruit with delicate translucent skin and a mild flavor that lets it's sweetness come out. This is an indeterminate plant which means that it just keeps growing and blooming all summer long. These plants have to be staked or caged as they will grow five to six feet tall. Growing against a fence might be an excellent choice for these. Keep them well fed but go easy on the nitrogen as these plants don't need any extra encouragement to grow! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Red Torch Tomato

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Red Torch tomato is another hybrid with an intriguing oblong tomato that is only 1½ inches long and weighs in at 1½ ounces. The attractive red skin is graced with an intriguing yellowish gold striping on the skin. It isn't big enough for me to call it a Roma like paste tomato so treat this one as you would a cherry tomato. It is also an indeterminate hybrid with 5 to 6 foot vines. It is a prolific producer and an early producer. It was bred to have excellent tolerance to environmental stress like heat and harsh growing conditions - hmm, sounds like Kansas. If you are always challenged to have any plant be successful in your garden, I think this would be one to try. It averages 100 fruit per plant and will start bearing 60 to 70 days after transplanting, assuming you don't try to transplant it in early April! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.

## Sparky XSL Tomato

This is Gardening with Chuck. I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. To me there is just something adorable about a tomato that is named Sparky! Sparky is a cherry tomato and is one of the few that is classified as XSL or extended shelf life. A more traditional cherry tomato this one is also indeterminate which means 5 to 6 foot vines. If you like to produce for farmers markets this should be high on your list. Fruits are 1 inch in diameter and weigh about 1 ounce each. It has a traditional reddish skin color and that similar yellow streaking on the skin as Red Torch. It too has been bred for tolerance to environmental stresses. It's another quick yielder at 60 to 70 days after transplanting. It'll produce about 60 to 70 fruits per year. This one happens to be very sweet which should be attractive to fresh snackers, especially kids. It has a Brix, or sweetness, score of 8.5 which is good! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Gardening with Chuck.