

CLAYVILLE RURAL LIFE CENTER & MUSEUM

Pleasant Plains, Il. 62677

Living History

Resource List Series

No. 10

GARDEN SEEDS FOR THE 1850s

Including a list of recommended seed varieties  
from a primary source and list of varieties and  
where they may be obtained.

Complementary Copy

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Resource List #10  
Seed Varieties of the 1850s

Note: Recommended for use in Springfield, Illinois, by Simeon Francis, in the Transactions of the Illinois State Agricultural Society, vol. 3 (1857), pp. 500-511. The capitalization here is that of the original article.

ASPARAGUS: "There are but, two varieties of asparagus"

BEANS: DWARF, BUNCH, SNAP OR STRING

Early China red-eye  
Early yellow six-weeks  
Early Valentine  
Refugee bean  
White succotash  
White royal dwarf

POLE BEANS

Early Dutch Caseknife  
Cranberry  
Small Lima  
Large Lima

BEETS:

Early Bassano  
Early yellow turnip  
Early blood turnip  
The long blood red

BROCCOLI: "Is a species of cauliflower"

CABBAGE:

Early York  
Late York  
Early Winningstadt  
Premium flat Dutch  
Late drumhead  
Drumhead Savoy  
Large Bergen  
Red Dutch  
Kohl Rabi (green and purple)

CAULIFLOWER: "There is an early and late variety"

CARROT:

Early horn  
Long orange  
Blood red or purple

CELERY:

Rose colored  
Solid  
Silver giant

PEPPERS:

Small  
Long cayenne  
Cherry

} for pepper sauce

Squash  
Bull nose  
Sweet mountain  
Sweet Spanish

} for pickling

POTATOES:

Kidney  
Mountain June  
Neshanoc

RADISH:

Early short top  
Long scarlet  
Scarlet turnip  
Long salmon  
Yellow turnip  
Black Spanish  
Winter China

SPINACH: "The round leaf is the variety for summer and the prickley for fall sowing"

SQUASH:

Early bush summer crookneck  
Autumnal marrow squash  
Lima cocoanut, long and blue  
Hubbard

SALSIFY:

Vegetable oyster

TOMATO: "There are two standard varieties -- the large smooth red and yellow. Most persons prefer the red. There are also small yellow and red varieties for pickling."

TURNIP:

White top  
Red top strap leaved  
Winter flat Dutch  
Ruta бага

HERBS:

Sage  
Summer savory  
Sweet marjorum  
Thyme  
Parsley  
Lavender  
Coriander  
Lemon balm  
Fennel  
Caraway

CRESS, PEPPER GRASS, TONGUE GRASS: "There are two varieties, the curled and broad leaf"

CUCUMBERS:

Early Russian  
London long green  
Gherkin

EGGPLANT:

Early long purple  
Large oval purple

INDIAN CORN:

Smith's early white  
Red cob sweet corn  
Mammoth sweet corn

LETTUCE:

Early curled Silesia  
Green head lettuce  
Imperial cabbage  
Ice cos  
Brown head  
Brown Dutch

MELON: CANTELOUPE

Christiana  
Green citron  
Pineapple  
Beechwood  
Skillman's fine netted  
Skillman's large  
Large muskmelon

WATER MELON:

Mountain sweet  
Mountain sprout  
Spanish  
Long Island  
Orange  
Citron

OKRA: "GUMBO"

ONION:

Top tree  
Potatoe  
Weathersfield red

PARSNIP: "There is supposed to be but one variety of the parsnip"

PEAS:

Early May  
Comstock's earliest dwarf  
Dwarf blue Prussian  
Champion of England  
Large white marrowfat (American Late)

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Seed List for 1975

Re-creating the gardens typical of those who came here to central Illinois from the northeast and the southeast requires research in sources unfamiliar to most historians. Two important ones which we have studied carefully are:

Thomas Bridgeman. The Young Gardener's Assistant. New York, 1844.  
 Simeon, Francis, "On Practical Gardening in Illinois." Transactions of the Illinois State Agricultural Society, 3(1857), pp. 500-511.

The first step was to make lists of all the varieties of each vegetable. Next, several modern seed catalogs of companies known to carry older varieties were examined. The varieties of the 1850s were determined and included in this list.

In some cases where no named historic varieties of a crop were available, ones designated "old fashioned" have been included, for instance the "Kentucky Wonder" bean. The designations as to whether the crops would be found in the gardens of the "northerners" or the "southerners" come from information in Richard Lyle Power's Planting Corn Belt Culture, hints in the seed catalogs, or our common knowledge. We know that sweet potatoes were raised in Sangamon County largely by people from one of the two southern culture regions from statistics in the Agricultural Census of the county in 1850.

	Vegetable	Bridgeman or Francis	Northern or Southern	Seed Catalog*
Beans:	Dark Red Kidney	--	N	F, G, S
	Navy	--	N	F, G, S
	Kentucky Wonder	"Traditional"	S	F, G, S
	Lima, Henderson's Bush (Butter Beans)	1857 similar	S	F, S
	Speckled	1844	N	G
	Small or Baby	1857	N	G
	Yard Long	1844	N	G, S
Beets:	Detroit Dark Red	1844, 1857 sim.	N	F, G, S, S
	Extra Early Egyptian	1844, 1857 sim.	--	S
Cabbage:	Early Flat Dutch	1844, 1857	N	F, G, S
	Late Flat Dutch	1844, 1857	N	G, S
Carrot:	Long Orange	1844, 1857	--	S
Corn:	Broom		N	S
	Flint, Longfellow Yellow	Power, p. 138	N	S
	Country Gentleman	--	--	F, S
	Indian Calico	--	--	S
	Yellow Dent, Reids	Power, p. 138	S	S

\*F = Henry Field, Shenandoah, Iowa; G = Gurneys, Yankton, S. Dak.; S = Schumways, Rockford, Ill.

Cress, Curled Garden	1844, 1857	N	G, S
Cucumbers: Gherkins	1844, 1857	--	G, S
Long Green	1844, 1857	N	S
Gourds: Mixes	--	--	S
Luffa Sponge	"Traditional"	--	G, S
Kale: Green Curled Scotch	1844	N	G, S
Lettuce: Black Seeded Simpson	--	--	G, S
Cos or Paris (Romaine)	1844, 1857	N	G, S
Mustard: Southern Giant Curled	--	S	S
Melons: Rocky Ford Musk (from Netted Gam)	1844, 1857 sim.	N	G, S
Citron	1844, 1857	--	G, S
Onions: Ebenezer Yellow (sets)	1844 similar	N	G, S
White Sweet Spanish (plants)	--	--	G
Weathersfield (Hamburger)	1857	N	S
Parsnips: All American	--	N	F, G
Peppers: Long Red Cayenne	1844, 1857	S	G, S
Peas: Black Eyed (Cowpeas)	--	S	G, S
Dwarf White Sugar	1844	--	G
Potatoes: Early Norland	Early 20th C.	N	F, G
Kennebec White	Early 20th C.	N	G, F
German, Lady Finger	Brought by Immigrants	(S)	G
Pumpkins: Connecticut Field	1844	N	G, S
Radishes: Black Spanish	1844, 1857	--	G, S
China Winter	1844, 1857	--	G, S
Scarlet Turnip	1844, 1857	N	S
Salsify: Vegetable Oyster	1844	N	F, G
Spinach: New Zealand	1844	N	G, S
Squash: Golden Crook Neck	1857 sim.		
Power, p. 31		N	F, G, S
Blue Hubbard	1857 sim.	N	G
Hubbard	1857	N	F
Striped Cushaw	1844 sim.	N	G
Tomatoes: No historic varieties			
Turnips: Greens	--	S	S
Purple Top	1844, 1857	--	S
Globe Shaped	1844, 1857	--	F, G