

# All-America Vegetables

We have all seen the red, white, and blue logo of All-America Selections (AAS) on the seed packet, plant tag, or in seed catalogs. AAS winners are superior new annual flower and vegetable plants recognized for significant achievements – a promise of gardening success. Only the very best varieties receive this prestigious award. All AAS winners have been tested for home garden performance in more than 30 independent test sites. One of the official AAS test sites is the Spooner Agricultural Research Station just east of Spooner on Hwy. 70.

Gardeners can rely on AAS winners to perform in your garden because of these unbiased, independent tests. Most of the time only one to three vegetable varieties and the same number of flowers get this award each year, and sometimes none qualify.

The following three vegetables are the AAS winners for 2004. All three of these varieties performed well in the demonstration garden at the Spooner Agricultural Research Farm.

**Watermelon F1 'Sweet Beauty'** – 'Sweet Beauty' offers consistently sweet flavor and crisp texture. It was praised by AAS Judges for its superior eating qualities. 'Sweet Beauty' melons are 5 to 7 pounds, an oblong shape with dark green shine and medium green stripes. Described as an "ice box" type, it means 'Sweet Beauty' is a single-serving size. Improved for earliness, 'Sweet Beauty' melons can be harvested in about 77 to 80 days from sowing seed directly into the garden. The vigorous plant spreads vines about 8 to 10 feet.

**Winter Squash F1 'Sunshine'** – 'Sunshine' is a new squash that outshined other varieties in side-by-side trials across North America. The vibrant orange-red skin is distinctive, similar to sunshine, hence the name. The 3- to 4-pound fruit is a flattened globe shape. The bright orange flesh is sweet, nutty, creamy smooth and completely stringless when baked, steamed or microwaved. 'Sunshine' plants are adaptable to any growing location as long as the growing season is 80 to 95 days. Expect mature squash in 95 to 100 days from sowing seed or 80 days from transplants. Harvest ripe fruit in the fall prior to protect from frost. The short vines need 6 to 8 feet in the full-sun garden.

**Melon F1 'Amy'** – 'Amy' exhibited improved qualities such as earliness and higher yield when grown next to similar "canary" type melons. 'Amy' melons are eye-catching. They are bright golden yellow with smooth skin; without netting or sutures. The radiant color indicates when the melon is ready for harvest. Cutting open the mature melon will release the distinctive melon aroma. There is a small seed cavity surrounded by moist, white flesh noted for its sweet flavor and firm texture. 'Amy' plants will produce melons in 79 to 80 days from transplanting. The vigorous spreading vines need 6 feet of garden space or they can be trained up a trellis.

The demonstration garden at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station where the AAS selections are grown is open to the public on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you are planning to visit the demonstration gardens, please check in at the Station's administration office for directions and other information.