Entries receiving
The Award of Garden Merit (H3)

'Cobnut' AGM (H3) 2008.
Sent by and available from Johnsons Seeds.
Large, semi-trailing plant. 22 large, buff-coloured, ridged fruits picked from eight plants on 30 September. The orange fleshed fruits have a small seed cavity. Average weight of a fruit was 1050g.
*Early ripening, large, ridged fruits with a small seed cavity. Good crop of heavy fruits.*
Widely available.

'Harrier' AGM (H3) 2008.
Sent by and available from Thompson & Morgan Ltd.
Large, semi-trailing plant. 30 medium-sized, buff-coloured fruits picked from eight plants on 30 September. Fruits are bell-shaped with a small seed cavity and orange flesh. Average weight of a fruit was 740g.
*Very early maturing crop of small to medium sized, bell-shaped fruits, with a small seed cavity. Fruits developed close to the main stem, making picking easy.*
Widely available.

'Hawk' AGM (H3) 2008.
Sent by and available from Mr Fothergill's Seeds Ltd.
Large, semi-trailing plant. 45 medium-sized, buff-coloured fruits picked from eight plants on 30 September. Fruits are pear-shaped with a small seed cavity and golden-orange flesh. Average weight of a fruit was 650g.
*Very attractive, pear-shaped fruits with orange-gold flesh.*
Available in one retail catalogue.
‘Hunter’ AGM (H3) 2008.  
Sent by and available from Unwins Seeds Ltd. Also offered by Tozer Seeds Ltd.

Large, semi-trailing plant. 60 medium-sized, buff-coloured fruits picked from eight plants on 30 September. Long pear-shaped fruits have a small seed cavity and golden-orange flesh. Average weight of a fruit was 860g.

A very high yield of uniformly medium sized, long pear-shaped fruits with a small seed cavity. Early ripening with orange-gold flesh. The fruits developed close to the main stem, making picking easy. Available in three retail catalogues.

H3 = plants hardy outside in some regions or in particular situations or which, whilst usually grown outside in summer, need frost-free protection in winter.

Sources of seed for these cultivars vary from year to year. Please see the Royal Horticultural Society's leaflet Award of Garden Merit Vegetables for current stockists.

This leaflet is available on the web at http://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/award_plants.asp
A copy can also be obtained by sending an A4 sized, self addressed envelope with two first class stamps to: 'AGM List', Botany Department, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB

Trial Notes

Objectives:
- To compare and assess a range of butternut squash cultivars.
- To compare the new with the established cultivars.
- To recommend the Award of Garden Merit [AGM] to outstanding cultivars for garden use.
- To demonstrate the cultivation of this crop.

Entries:
There were 14 entries in the Trial submitted by various seed companies in the UK, and Europe.

Cultivation:
The site was cultivated and raked by hand, no farmyard manure or fertiliser was incorporated. Seed was sown under glass on 20 May 2008: two seeds per 9cm pot, using peat-free modular compost and watered with Revive (a product containing natural soil micro-organisms that encourage soil fertility and healthy plant growth). Once germinated the seedlings were thinned to one plant per pot and grown on in the greenhouse. On 27 May they were put outside in the cold-frames to harden off, being protected for the first couple of days with a covering of fleece.
The site on the Trials Field was raked and marked out into double rows 75cm apart, with a gap of 150cm left between each double row. Transplanting took place on the 12 June and the young plants were spaced 90cm apart in the rows. One double row [3.6m long] of each entry was grown.

Judging:
The Vegetable Trials Subcommittee inspected the trial at intervals throughout the growing season. They assessed the crop on 1 October for the Award of Garden Merit [AGM]. The Subcommittee considered the following criteria:

earliness : sweetness : colour : size
Findings:
The crop had initially been slow to develop. Lack of space in Propagation had meant that the heated bench had not been used and germination had taken longer, so planting took place a week later than planned. The fruits had only just started to form by 31 July and then the weather in August was cooler than was ideal for the crop (The average maximum daily temperature at Wisley was 21.1°C). Nationally it was the dullest August on record since 1912 and there were only 113 hours of sunshine at Wisley compared to the long-term average of 200.4 hours for this month. The Sub-Committee commented that the plants grow best when the roots are warm and that planting through black plastic could promote this. However, there could be a danger from late frosts as the plastic might inhibit the radiation of warmth from the soil, increasing the risk of damage to the foliage. Peter Dawson recommended sowing 14 days before planting out and mentioned that, to avoid the risk from frost in late May/early June, he sows between 7 and 14 May. Mike Day prefers to sow at the beginning of May and to plant earlier, covering with fleece to protect against frosts.
The plants would normally be expected to have set fruit in July and ripen in the hot weather of August, but while some (e.g. 'Hunter') had set well in July; others (e.g. 'Hercules') had made too much leafy growth and only began to set at the end of July. A few (e.g. 'Cobnut') had produced a lot of male flowers. However, by 1 October when the Sub-Committee assessed the fruits for the AGM, they were pleased to see that the crop had developed very well in what had been a difficult year for butternut squashes. They noted that the fruits from 'Early Butternut' were rather green, but that it was known to ripen in a hotter year and that 'Waltham', an old open pollinated cultivar that produces large fruits with a small seed cavity, can be difficult to ripen in the UK. 'Barbara' stood out with its unusual green and cream striped fruits that become more yellow when fully ripe.
Butternut squash grow best when the weather is hot, but it is important not to let them go short of water. They grow very well in a glasshouse or poly-tunnel. Relatively pest and disease free, the main problems are slug damage to the young plants and mildew late in the summer; although by late summer the fruits were likely to have developed well and be starting to ripen, so a reduction in foliage would tend to allow more sunlight through rather than inhibit development. The plants take up a lot of space and members suggested growing them near a fence or hedge where they could scramble upwards. Even so, it was commented that most gardeners would not have room for more than a couple of plants and that they would crop more reliably in a poly-tunnel or planted close to a wall for warmth. Cultivars bred to produce the fruits close to the main stem were easier to pick but still had branches that spread out, however these should be left on the plant to feed the developing fruits. The orange colour and flavour of the flesh developed when the fruits were fully ripe. Under-ripe fruits had soft skins, paler or greeny-coloured flesh and would have a sour taste. When fully ripe the flesh would be sweeter, the skins would be hard and the fruits would store through the winter. In the UK it may be necessary to pick and ripen fruits in a glasshouse or poly-tunnel.
The trial had very successfully illustrated the progress made in breeding butternut squash for the British climate. The old American cultivars were later flowering and
needed warmth to grow well, but the new UK bred cultivars were bred to flower earlier, so had a better chance of developing and ripening fully.

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<th>Trial Entries:</th>
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<td>AGM (H3) 2008</td>
<td>'Harrier' F₁</td>
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<td>'Early Butternut'</td>
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<td>'Waltham'</td>
<td>Bakker Brothers</td>
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**Addresses of Senders**

Bakker Brothers, Oostelĳke Randweg 12, 1723 LH Noord-Scharwoude, Netherlands.

D T Brown & Co, Bury Road, Kentford, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7PQ. [www.dtbrownseeds.co.uk](http://www.dtbrownseeds.co.uk)

Kings Seeds, E W King & Co Ltd, Monks Farm, Kelvedon, Essex CO5 9PG. [www.kingsseeds.com](http://www.kingsseeds.com)

Johnsons Seeds, Gazeley Road, Kentford, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7QB. [www.johnsonsseeds.com](http://www.johnsonsseeds.com)

Moles Seeds Ltd, Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway, Essex CO3 8PD. [www.molesseeds.co.uk](http://www.molesseeds.co.uk)

Mr Fothergill's Seeds, Gazeley Road, Kentford, Suffolk CB8 7QB. [www.fothergills.co.uk](http://www.fothergills.co.uk)

Sakata UK Ltd, Spalding Road, Sutterton, Boston, Lincs. PE20 2EW.

Suttons Consumer Products Ltd, Woodview Road, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NG. [www.suttons.co.uk](http://www.suttons.co.uk)

Thompson & Morgan Ltd, Poplar Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BU. [www.thompson-morgan.com](http://www.thompson-morgan.com)

Tozer Seeds Ltd, Pyports, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3EH. [www.tozerseedsdirect.com](http://www.tozerseedsdirect.com)

Unwins Seeds Ltd, Elm House Nurseries, Alconbury Hill, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 4HY. [www.unwins.co.uk](http://www.unwins.co.uk)

Source: Trials Office, The RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB

e-mail: trials@rhs.org.uk.

More information about RHS Trials and other trials reports can be found on the RHS Website: [http://www.rhs.org.uk/trials](http://www.rhs.org.uk/trials)