

# **TRIALS REPORT**

**2009**

## **Melons and Watermelons, single portion size, grown in the open ground**



## Trial of Melons and Watermelons, single portion size, grown in the open ground

2009



**Entries receiving  
The Award of Garden Merit (H2-3)**

### **'Emir' AGM (H2-3) 2009.**

Sent by and available from Johnsons Seeds.  
Fruits are oval, averaging 14.5cm long, 8cm in diameter; yellow-green and netted with orange flesh. Each plant produced an average of 9 fruits, 5 of which were ripe for 30 September.

*Good crop of netted Chanentais type fruits with orange flesh. Also did well at Hyde Hall and Great Dixter.*

**Available in two retail catalogues.**



### **'Alvaro' AGM (H2-3) 2009.**

Sent by Pro-Veg Seeds Ltd.  
Cantaloupe type fruits are oval, averaging 18cm long, 12cm in diameter; grey-green, becoming more yellow, with dark-green longitudinal stripes and orange flesh. Each plant produced an average of 15 fruits, 9 of which were ripe for 30 September.

*Big crop of attractive pale-green skins with dark-green stripes and salmon-orange flesh. Good flavour.*

**Available in one retail catalogue.**



The following entries have been recommended for the AGM  but cannot receive the award until they are available to the public in retail catalogues. It is the responsibility of the sender to inform the Trials Office at Wisley that all queries have been resolved.

## SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

'Picasso'

Sent by Pro-Veg Seeds Ltd.

Oval fruits, averaging 14cm long, 13cm in diameter; lightly netted, grey-green with dark-green longitudinal stripes and orange flesh. Each plant produced an average of 11 fruits, with approximately 8 of these ripe for 30 September.

*Big crop of attractive, pale-green skinned fruits with dark-green stripes, orange flesh and a good flavour. Not yet available in retail catalogues.*



'Orange Sherbet'.

Sent by Pro-Veg Seeds Ltd.

Cantaloupe type fruits are oval, averaging 18cm long, 12cm in diameter; pale-green, netted with dark-green longitudinal stripes and orange flesh. Each plant produced an average of 9 fruits, 4 of which were ripe for 30 September.

*Good crop of slightly elongated fruits with attractive pale-green skins, striped dark green. Orange flesh has a good flavour.*

Not yet available in retail catalogues.



'Sugar Nut'.

Sent by Thompson & Morgan.

Oval fruits, averaging 18cm long, 10.5cm in diameter; yellow with pale-green flesh. Each plant produced an average of 5 fruits, 2 of which were ripe for 30 September.

*Honeydew type with yellow skin and pale-green flesh. Good flavour.*

Not yet available in retail catalogues.



H2-3 = plants intermediate between requiring unheated glass and being 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/Plant-trials-and-awards/Plant-awards/AGM-plants>

A copy can also be obtained by sending an A4 sized, self addressed envelope with two first class stamps to: 'AGM List', Botany Department, Royal Horticultural Society Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB

A full listing of vegetable seeds suppliers is also available on the RHS website at [www.rhs.org.uk/vegseedsuppliers](http://www.rhs.org.uk/vegseedsuppliers)

## Trial Notes

### Objectives:

- To demonstrate a range of small fruited melon and watermelon cultivars, grown in the open ground.

### Entries:

There were 20 entries, submitted by various seed companies in the UK. Three melon and two watermelon cultivars from the entries were also demonstrated at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, at partner garden East Ruston Old Vicarage Garden and at Great Dixter.

### Cultivation:

Seed at Wisley was sown on 27 April under glass, singly into 9cm pots using peat-reduced sowing compost, watered in with Revive (a soil treatment of natural micro organisms) at 10ml/ltr, then germinated at 20-30°C. All entries had germinated by 6 May and the seedlings were grown on at 20°C, being potted on into 1 litre pots when ready. Having been gradually hardened off from 25 May, three plants of each entry were planted out, through black landscape fabric, on 18 June. The plants were spaced 100cm apart each way and the trial was covered with a fleece tent to maintain warmth and to help speed growth. It remained in place until the plants were flowering.

At Hyde Hall the seeds were germinated under glass during week beginning 30 March and hardened off from 25 May. Two weeks later, two plants of each cultivar were planted outside on the south-facing slope of compost mounds. These had been created by mounding and shaping garden compost so that it would help to trap heat and moisture within the mound and provide a large, south-facing surface. The young plants were covered with horticultural fleece, which was removed two weeks later when flowers had opened on some of the plants.



The crop under a fleece tent at Wisley



'Emir' on a compost mound at Hyde Hall



'Emir' growing on a huge compost heap at Great Dixter

### Judging:

The crop was grown with the same care and attention given to all trials but, as a demonstration, would not normally have been assessed by the Vegetable Trials Assessment Panel. However, the Panel did monitor the development of the crop and found that a number of entries had performed particularly well; these were then assessed for the Award of Garden Merit on 30 September using the following criteria:

earliness : yield : flavour : colour and texture of flesh : plant health and vigour :  
overall appearance

### Findings:

The Panel were impressed that such a good crop had been produced in the open ground considering that this had been a rather sunless year. At Hyde Hall the first to ripen was 'Emir', which was harvested on 18 August, with 'Sweetheart' ripening for harvest on 21 August. The fruits there were thinned to allow no more than two or three to develop per plant, but no thinning was carried out at Wisley.

## Results from RHS Garden Hyde Hall (fruits thinned to two or three per plant)

Name	Comments	Rating ***
'Emir'	Earliest producing crop with large fruit. The flavour was good but not as sweet as 'Sweetheart.'	**
'Outdoor Wonder'	A green melon of good size but could be sweeter.	**
'Sweetheart'	Small Ball shape with a substantial amount of flesh and incredible flavour. Was said to "taste of the south of France".	***
'Janosik'	A nice watermelon flavour but felt it could be sweeter, although the yellow flesh may have given the impression of being less sweet.	*
'Sweet Baby'	The fruit had only a small amount of flesh and was somewhat bland.	*

By the middle of September the foliage on most entries at Wisley had become mildewed and on many had died back but, although the fruits on these plants stopped developing, it had allowed the sun to reach and ripen them. The trials staff found that some of the fruits had begun to rot where they were in contact with the landscape fabric and, as possible frosts had been predicted, they harvested all fruits of a usable size on 21 September. These were placed in a glasshouse to continue ripening. The Panel suggested that the gardener could use tiles or straw to keep the fruits off the ground and commented that a cloche or fleece put over the plants after fruit set would help to maintain warmth, so speed the ripening of fruit on the plant.

## Cropping record from RHS Wisley

No.	Name	Full size (for glasshouse ripening)	Immature (not ripening size)
1	'Emir'	15	12
2	'Outdoor Wonder'	6	12
3	'Rampicante Zuccherino'	12	15
4	'Sweetheart'	17	18
5	'Alvaro'	27	18
6	'Picasso'	25	8
7	MGA 10411	16	18
8	'Orange Sherbet'	14	15
9	'Jinfei'	5	9
10	007 Honey	9	9
11	'Asahi Miyako '	4	1
12	'Maribo'	0	0
13	'Janosik'	6	0
14	'Mini Yellow'	0	0
15	CS75814	17	18
16	CS81819	4	4
17	'Little Baby Flower'	0	0
18	'Sugar Nut'	6	10
19	Experimental	3	11
20	'Sweet Baby'	2	0

Two of the watermelons produced surprisingly good fruits, in spite of the dull summer. 'Asahi Miyako' was seedless and quite early ripening for a watermelon and 'Janosik' produced attractive yellow-fleshed fruits, but neither had a lot of flavour at Wisley; Hyde Hall also found that 'Janosik' lacked sweetness. The melon 'Sweetheart' produced good flavoured fruits at Hyde Hall where the plants were only allowed to develop two or three fruits each. However at Wisley, where no thinning was carried out, the Panel found that the taste was not exceptional. They also found that, while fairly productive, the plants of this cultivar were very vigorous and spreading, so judged it to have been superseded by newer cultivars for out-door cultivation.

#### Entries:

Awards	Name	Sender
AGM (H2-3) 2009	'Emir'	Johnsons Seeds
AGM (H2-3) 2009	'Alvaro'	Pro-Veg Seeds
AGM (H2-3) 2009 STA	'Orange Sherbet'	Pro-Veg Seeds
AGM (H2-3) 2009 STA	'Picasso'	Pro-Veg Seeds
AGM (H2-3) 2009 STA	'Sugar Nut'	Thompson & Morgan
<del>AGM (H2) 1993</del>	'Sweetheart'	Sakata UK
	007 Honey	Pro-Veg Seeds
	'Asahi Miyako '	Seeds of Italy
	CS75814	Pro-Veg Seeds
	CS81819	Pro-Veg Seeds
	Experimental	Thompson & Morgan
	'Janosik'	Seeds of Italy
	'Jinfei'	Pro-Veg Seeds
	'Little Baby Flower'	Thompson & Morgan
	'Maribo'	Pro-Veg Seeds
	MGA 10411	Pro-Veg Seeds
	'Mini Yellow'	Pro-Veg Seeds
	'Outdoor Wonder'	S E Marshall / Pro-Veg Seeds
	'Rampicante Zuccherino'	Seeds of Italy
	'Sweet Baby'	Thompson & Morgan

#### Addresses of Senders:

Johnsons Seeds, Gazeley Road, Kentford, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7QB.

[www.johnsons-seeds.com](http://www.johnsons-seeds.com)

Pro-Veg Seeds Ltd, 6 Shingay Lane, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4SS.

S E Marshall & Co Ltd, Alconbury Hill, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 4HY.

[www.marshalls-seeds.co.uk](http://www.marshalls-seeds.co.uk)

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

Seeds of Italy, Phoenix Industrial Est., Unit C3, Rosslyn Crescent, Harrow, Middx. HA1 2SP.

[www.seedsofitaly.com](http://www.seedsofitaly.com)

Thompson & Morgan Ltd, Poplar Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BU.

[www.thompson-morgan.com](http://www.thompson-morgan.com)

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

e-mail: [trials@rhs.org.uk](mailto: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>