

Handout for Uncommon Vegetables and Common Pests

For more inspiration in your garden, check out these alternatives to more common plants – Amy Turnbull.

Vegetable	Reasons to grow this	Growing Tips	Problems
GREEN BEAN ALTERNATIVES			
Dried Beans	You are likely to miss the harvest window for green beans	-plant in early June, when soil is at least 18 °C	-fungal diseases during germination
Yardlong Beans, (asparagus bean, long bean)	Continual harvest, withstands heat, versatile in kitchen	-harvest every 3 days before when pods are the thickness of a pencil and before you see bulging in the pods	none
Soybeans	Easy and high-yielding -fresh soybean flavour is unparalleled	-plant after danger of frost in well-drained soil; soil should be moist but not too wet during germination or seeds can rot	Japanese beetle
LETTUCE ALTERNATIVES			
Celtuce	Easy to grow, versatile in kitchen	-treat like lettuce in garden	Harvest when stems are 20 cm long
Escarole	Easy to grow, longer harvest, withstands cold	-treat like lettuce in garden	Allow space between plants in the row to reduce rot
PEAS			
Asparagus	Perennial, needs little work after first year	-transplant crowns into permanent spot -likes well-drained soil	Asparagus beetle are present in May and July
Snap peas	Less work and higher yield than shelled peas	-plant in April -keep well watered when flowering for optimum yield	Pick the first flush of peas and more pods will appear
ONION ALTERNATIVES			
Leeks	Extend the growing season into winter	-start in flats and transplant in May	If leek moth is present, use row cover
Shallots	Shallots are expensive to buy! Delicate onion flavour	-direct seed in May	Keep even moisture to reduce fungal diseases
BELL PEPPER ALTERNATIVE			
Chile peppers	Varieties for roasting, frying, drying, stuffing	-start seed 8 weeks before last frost -transplant in June	-blossoms drop if days above 30 °C or below 15 °C, nights above 21 °C, dry weather

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CELERY ALTERNATIVE			
Fennel	Celery texture with licorice flavour	-start seed 8 weeks before last frost, transplant	-minor fungal diseases cause lesions
DISCOVERING BRASSICAS			
Greens: bok choy, tatsoi, napa, komatsuna, choy sum, guy lon	Quick to mature, tender, sweet taste	-seed in flats 4 weeks before transplant -can direct seed but plants won't be as uniform	-swede midge -cabbage looper
Asian radishes: daikon, lo bok, mu	Mild flavour and versatile in kitchen	-same as above -spring radishes do best maturing in cool fall weather	-same as above -mature radishes can get buggy if left in garden too long
Kohlrabi	The crunch of celery but much less work	-same as above	-harvest when 2-4" wide
Broccolini	Continuously produces shoots for harvest, mild taste and tender	-same as above	-readily attacked by swede midge. Use row cover until July -pick florets as they mature.
Turnips	Young turnips are exquisite	-same as above	-pick when still small
CUCUMBER ALTERNATIVES			
Armenian cucumber	Mild taste, crisp texture	-start indoors in May, transplant in June	Downy and powdery mildew; Bacterial wilt from striped cucumber beetle
Patty pan squash	Fast maturing and versatile	-same as Armenian cuc	Downy and powdery mildew; Bacterial wilt from striped cucumber beetle
SPINACH ALTERNATIVE			
Swiss chard	Season-long harvest of tender greens	-plant in mid-May -pick continually to keep plants healthy	Cercospora : pick diseased leaves and discard

Great Links to check out!

Cornell University: Choosing a variety: [Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners](#)

[Phytotheca](#): general cultural information on many plants

OMAFRA - [OMAFRA Crop IPM](#)

OMAFRA - [Asian vegetables grown in Ontario](#)

Master Gardeners - [Japanese Beetle Control](#)

Master Gardeners - Diseases: [onion, melons, tomatoes](#)