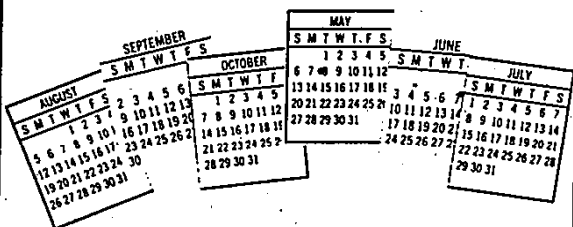


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Beat garden blahs with new varieties

Even the most dedicated gardener gets bored with the same old tomatoes and beans year after year. If your garden is in a rut, Extension specialists at Michigan State University suggest trying some new crops, or at least some new varieties of your old favorites.

For instance, gardeners who like Oriental foods may want to try growing some of the ingredients. Chinese cabbage, mustard cabbage, Chinese kale, vegetable soybeans and white radishes are among the possibilities.

Edible podded peas are another. Pods picked before they start to bulge with peas are sweet and crunchy. They can be planted as early as you can work the soil. They mature in about two months, so they're one of the first crops to be ready for harvest.

THIS YEAR THERE'S a new wrinkle in edible podded peas. Sugar snap, an all-America gold medal winner for 1979, as billed as an edible podded snap pea that can be eaten even when it's filled with peas. It also offers an advantage over ordinary shelled peas: It provides about twice as much edible matter per foot of row. Sugar snap can be steamed, stir-fried or snapped and eaten raw in salads. It freezes well but cannot be canned. Canning, like overcooking,

makes the pods fall apart. Order early; this new crop will probably be in high demand.

A salad garden need not be limited to leaf lettuce and round, red radishes. Try growing romaine, endive, spinach and escarole for salad greens; oblong red, round white and long which radishes; green onions, carrots, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes and peppers.

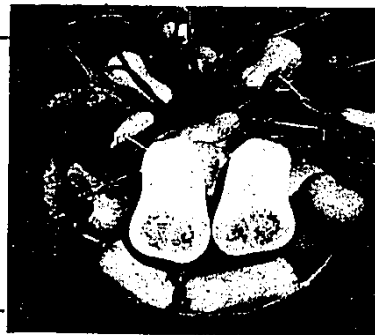
Speaking of peppers, let this be the year you try a couple of plants of sweet, banana-shaped peppers or green bell peppers that turn yellow instead of red when they ripen. Tomatoes, too, offer a wide range of sizes and colors, from tiny red and yellow cherry tomatoes to giant red, yellow and even white-fruited varieties. A tomato variety

developed specifically for stuffing is also available.

IF YOU LIKE summer squash and zucchini, try scallopini, a recent All-America selection that's great for stuffing. For a different twist on winter squash, try vegetable spaghetti, a hard-skinned squash with spaghetti-like pulp that goes well with your favorite meat and tomato sauce.

Any seed catalog is full of ideas for the adventurous. MSU Extension specialists advise a degree of restraint, however. Stick with varieties you know you can depend on for the bulk of your food production. Try new crops or varieties on a limited trial basis. Abandon tried-and-true performers only when you know you've found something better.

One of the newer variety of seeds is this butternut squash (Burpee) that needs only one-quarter of the space needed for the usual vining types



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