Organic Vegetable Research Showcase
Sunday, September 11th, 2016, 2-5pm
West Madison Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Road, Verona, WI
Contact: Julie Dawson, Department of Horticulture, dawson@hort.wisc.edu
Free, RSVP at: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/organic-vegetable-research-showcase-tickets-26522885665

Come for an interactive field day on organic vegetable variety trials and production! Walk through ongoing trials and ask questions of plant breeders, pathologists, entomologists, seed company representatives and fellow farmers about current issues, management practices and varieties.

Seed to Kitchen collaborative: This collaboration among chefs, farmers and breeders is a unique opportunity to focus on vegetable variety characteristics important to local food systems. We have over 400 varieties of 12 different crops in research trials at WMARS. Julie Dawson dawson.horticulture.wisc.edu/chef-farmer-plant-breeder-collaboration/

Northern Organic Vegetable Improvement Collaborative: We are partnering with organic farmers to breed new varieties and identify the best performing existing varieties. Crop trials this year include spinach, sweet corn, bell peppers, acorn and delicata squash, cabbage and tomatoes. Bill Tracy, Erin Silva organic.info/novic/

Novel Table Beet Breeding: The demand for locally grown produce has created markets for unique beets, including the yellow/orange cylindrical open-pollinated Badger Beets. A participatory breeding effort is also underway to select varieties for either high or low earthy flavor. Irwin Goldman goldman.horticulture.wisc.edu

Carrot Breeding for Increased Top Size: Carrots with larger tops show superior ability to compete with weeds, making top size an important trait for organic carrot farmers. Parallel organic and conventional trials are conducted at West Madison to select for large top size. Other traits evaluated include novel root color, flavor, and nitrate content. Phil Simon, Erin Silva. Photo by Claire Luby.

Organic Potato Seed Production and Breeding: We conduct on-farm trials of organic seed potato production, including heirloom, specialty and new potato lines, tracking tuber health and economics. We also teach farmers to make potato crosses and trial the progeny. Ruth Genger, Amy Charkowski, Doug Rouse organicpotato.wisc.edu

Sweet Corn Breeding: Most consumers prefer very sweet corn on the cob, but chefs find it too sweet and soft for use in savory dishes and soups. Chilean Choclos (photo) have been well received by chefs in Madison. We are also improving heirloom varieties for local production. A new variety, “Who Gets Kissed?” is the first in a series of organic, open pollinated varieties being developed through a participatory breeding project which continues to select for earliness and resistance to corn earworm. Bill Tracy

Tomato high tunnel and field comparison trials: We are in the third season of trials comparing tomato varieties in hoop house and open field production. We are conducting taste evaluations with chefs, farmers and members of the public. Field trials also include breeding lines in the Tomato Organic Management and Improvement project, seeking to combine exceptional flavor with resistance to late blight, early blight and septoria. Julie Dawson http://eorganic.info/tomi