

## Rutabaga Variety Trials - 2020

### Instructions for On-Farm Sites across Canada

#### Project Context

Thank you for participating in the Canadian Organic Vegetable Improvement (CANOVI) network. This project is a collaboration between the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at the University of British Columbia and the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security at SeedChange (formerly USC Canada). One of the goals of this project is to create a national network and platform where existing varieties and new breeding lines can be evaluated for their performance in a range of regional organic and ecological farming conditions through on-farm variety trials.

Varieties that are sold to organic and ecological farmers in Canada have not necessarily been trialed on sites that reflect the diversity of Canadian farming conditions. Through a co-ordinated trialing network across Canada and integration with partner networks in Canada and the United States, we can gather information about both existing varieties and new breeding lines grown under organic management and across a range of farming conditions.

The information gathered through this trial network will be used to help farmers:

- Identify the best-performing varieties in your region, both for market garden production and seed production
- Identify which varieties would be suitable as parents for future regional breeding projects
- Build the capacity of farmers to conduct on-farm variety trials useful for their farming operation

For any questions you may have about the variety trials, please contact the [regional coordinator](#) for the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security ([seedsecurity.ca](http://seedsecurity.ca)) for your region:

- Atlantic Canada: Steph Hughes, SeedChange, [shughes@weseedchange.org](mailto:shughes@weseedchange.org)
- Quebec: Hugo Martorell, SeedChange, [hmartorell@weseedchange.org](mailto:hmartorell@weseedchange.org)
- Ontario: Rebecca Ivanoff, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, [rebecca@efao.ca](mailto:rebecca@efao.ca)
- Prairies: Iris Vaisman, Organic Alberta, [iris.vaisman@prairieorganicgrain.org](mailto:iris.vaisman@prairieorganicgrain.org)
- British Columbia: David Catzel, [bcseeds@farmfolkcityfolk.ca](mailto:bcseeds@farmfolkcityfolk.ca)

You may also contact one of the CANOVI researchers:

- Alex Lyon, UBC Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, CANOVI Lead Researcher; [alexandra.lyon@ubc.ca](mailto:alexandra.lyon@ubc.ca); 604-710-2096
- Helen Jensen, Bauta Family Initiative Research Manager; [hjensen@weseedchange.org](mailto:hjensen@weseedchange.org); 514-433-8445

**A NOTE ABOUT VARIETY TRIALS IN THE COVID-19 CONTEXT**

On behalf of our team, we sincerely hope that you and yours are healthy and safe in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis. In Canada, and throughout the world, many agricultural research projects have been postponed or scaled-back, and while planning our season, we weren't sure if you would have the capacity or the interest to participate. We have been pleasantly surprised to find that interest in the on-farm variety trial program has actually increased this year. We thank you for your continued engagement!

In the past few months, there has been widespread recognition of the importance of resilient food systems, and local food systems. By doing this work, you're helping create knowledge that is useful to local food and seed producers. While this trial does not focus on seed production, those who wish can use it as an opportunity to explore seed production by saving seed from the OP varieties included in the trials, or by partnering with a seed grower in your region to do so. A number of resources on seed saving can be found on our website ([www.seedsecurity.ca](http://www.seedsecurity.ca)).

We understand that everyone is living with a great deal of uncertainty and facing pressure to adapt their businesses and lives to rapid change. We understand that your circumstances may change during the course of the season in a way that impacts your ability to continue the trials. If this happens, please get in touch with your regional coordinator to let them know.

**Rutabaga varieties for trialing**

This is the first year of rutabaga (*Lycium*) trials in the CANOVI program. It was first suggested as a trial candidate by a Quebec grower and received interest from growers across the country. Rutabaga is a good crop for food security in Canada, because it is adapted to cold climates, and can be stored over the winter. It is a biennial, so if you wish, you can store the roots over the winter and use them for seed production in 2021 (though it is not a requirement of the trial). Unlike most of the other crops we have trialed, there are no commercial F1 hybrid varieties, at least, not among the suppliers commonly used by Canadian organic farmers, so all the varieties distributed will be open-pollinated. We have selected a set of 8 varieties (Table 1), and you will receive seed for a subset of these 8 varieties. You may choose to plant all the varieties you receive, or a subset of the varieties that interest you most (please plant a minimum of 4).

**Table 1: Rutabaga varieties**

Variety	Seed Company	Days to maturity	F1/OP	Link to catalogue description
Altasweet	Prairie Garden Seeds	Not listed	OP	<a href="#">Altasweet-Prairie Garden Seeds</a>
Fortin Family Heirloom*	Jardins de la Ecoumene	Not listed	OP	<a href="#">Rutabaga Fortin - Bio</a>
Gilfeather	Johnny's	95	OP	<a href="#">Gilfeather - Organic Rutabaga Seed</a>
Helanor	Johnny's	90	OP	<a href="#">Helanor - Organic Rutabaga Seed</a>
Joan	High Mowing	90-100	OP	<a href="#">Joan-High Mowing</a>
Laurentian	Johnny's	95	OP	<a href="#">Johnny's-Laurentian</a>
Nadmorska	Adaptive Seeds	80	OP	<a href="#">Rutabaga, Nadmorska (Organic)</a>
York	Vesey's	115-120	OP	<a href="#">York Rutabaga - Vegetables</a>

\*Note: @abub ` aMj'UZZI 'XZjMZX' nx{aby'fMz{t yn 'tn| ; , bj UZ xZVZtb ` k yZuMMZjt b k MbgZy'b {tk Z' \_nxujMI{b ` ^H Z Mirjn` BZi\_nx{aZ b Vhl fZI kZI VZ^a

**Planting and Cultivation Recommendations**

The trial should be grown as you would normally grow rutabaga, including your normal bed and row spacing - the purpose of on-farm trials, is to test them on your farm! Below are a few general guidelines.

- Planting Dates
  - Direct seed
  - Please plant according to the appropriate dates for your region. Although rutabaga can be planted in spring as a summer harvest, our aim for this trial is for a fall harvest and a possible storage trial. Most varieties are 90 to 100 days, and many that we are growing are quite late and even get sweeter with some frost.
- Plot size:
  - You will receive 8 varieties. You can plant all 8, or choose a minimum of 4.
  - Recommended spacing is 4 to 6 plants/foot (use wider spacing if you prefer bigger roots, and vice versa).
  - We will provide enough seed for 12 row feet/variety, but you can reduce this to as little as 6 row feet/variety
  - Maximum row feet for the trial: 8 varieties \*12 foot plots = 96 row feet
  - Minimum row feet for the trial: 4 varieties \* 6 foot plots= 24 row feet
- Pest & Disease Managements:
  - Rutabaga can be protected from cabbage root maggots and flea beetles with floating row covers at time of planting. See the following resource (FR only), for detailed guidelines on the use of nets for insect management:  
<https://www.agrireseau.net/agriculturebiologique/documents/ilets%20anti-insectes.pdf>



