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Wonder Gold Bell Pepper

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Horticulture-Forestry Department
Agricultural Experiment Station
South Dakota State University, Brookings

Wonder Gold Bell Pepper

By

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Origin and Development

Wonder Gold is the result of a sweet pepper breeding program at the Agricultural Experiment Station, South Dakota State University. Morgold pepper (female) and a special strain of improved squash pepper selected at the Agriculture Experiment Station in 1960 were crossed and individual plants were selected for earliness and concentrated fruit set. Selections in the F₅ generation were crossed with Staddon's Select pepper. Selections of individual plants were made from this cross on the basis of fruit shape, color, set, and early maturity. Wonder Gold is a selection from the F₉ generation of the latter cross.

Plant and Fruit Description

Wonder Gold possesses the most desirable characteristics of the 3 varieties used in its development. The plants are medium in size, and grow to a height of 18 to 22 inches with adequate foliage to protect the fruits from sunscald. The fruit set is heavy, concentrated and uniform in

maturity. Fruit is borne upright and later becomes pendent. It has 3 to 4 lobes and tapers slightly.

The fruits are blocky (diameter/length=0.751) with an average size of 3 by 4 inches and an average weight of 3.6 to 4.3 ounces, depending upon the soil fertilization program, spacing, and climatic conditions. Flesh thickness usually varies from 6 to 8 millimeters. The fruits the glossy green when immature and golden yellow throughout when mature. They reach marketable size in about 50 days after transplanting in the field and develop a golden yellow color in about 70 days. Wonder Gold has the ability to set fruit early in the season under cool temperatures.

Quality

Fruits of Wonder Gold, when harvested for the fresh market, are mild in flavor and sweet. In limited freezing trials, the variety was found to be satisfactory as a frozen product.

COVER PHOTO—Typical fruit of Wonder Gold bell pepper. The flesh of the cut pepper shown measured slightly more than one-quarter of an inch in thickness.

Yield

Results of trials at Brookings (see accompanying table) show that Wonder Gold was definitely earlier and more productive than commercial varieties in 1968 and 1969. It did not produce the heaviest yield in 1967, although it was the earliest pepper in the trials. In 1967, during the second picking, every fruit was removed from the plants by mistake and this reduced the total yield. Results are not available for 1970.

On the basis of trials in Brookings and other areas, it appears that Wonder Gold is well adapted to northern growing areas. In July, 1971, the Agricultural Experiment Station released Wonder Gold and distributed foundation seed to seedmen for trial and increase. It is recommended for home gardens, fresh market growers and processors.

A Wonder Gold plant showing a typical set of fruit. Peppers set in the central location, as these are, rarely develop sunscald. Some branches have been removed to permit a better view of the fruit.

Results of Pepper Variety Trial

Variety	Market-able Yield Pounds Per Plant	Average Weight Pounds Per Fruit
—1967—		
Lincoln Bell	3.140	.216
Bellboy	3.046	.247
Tokyo Bell	2.916	.170
Wonder Gold	2.872	.201
Beautiful	2.750	.177
Delaware Belle	2.616	.197
Pennwonder	2.143	.197
Burpee Fordhook ...	1.763	.223
Staddon's Select	1.716	.210
Calwonder	1.620	.207
Vinedale	1.616	.153
Yolo Wonder B	1.383	.173
—1968—		
Wonder Gold	3.428	.240
Beautiful	3.075	.175
Lincoln Bell	2.824	.245
Staddon's Select	2.586	.260
Calwonder	2.274	.222
Idabelle	1.324	.287
—1969—		
Wonder Gold	3.459	.244
Peter Piper	3.200	.218
Tasty Hybrid	2.900	.243
Staddon's Select	2.800	.259
Bellboy	2.522	.254
Pennwonder	2.434	.231
Burpee Bellringer ...	1.722	.263
King of North	1.433	.222
Burpee Fordhook ...	1.000	.300
—1971—		
Canape F ₁	2.878	.206
Wonder Gold	2.574	.200
Golden Bell	2.196	.263
Delaware Bell	1.863	.183
Lincoln Bell	1.854	.207
Early Bountiful F ₁ ...	1.812	.162
Bell Boy F ₁	1.717	.213
Yolo Wonder	1.559	.213
Mercury	1.592	.220



