

**Post Rock Answers**  
**By Cassie Homan February 2, 2018**  
**Post Rock Extension District Horticulture Agent**

**Master Gardener Sweet Pepper Variety Trial**

2017 marked the second summer that the Master Gardeners conducted a Sweet Pepper Trial in the Post Rock District. This past summer we planted the peppers in the Radish Patch Community Gardens in Lincoln, Kansas. For the summer of 2016 the trial was done in Beloit at the North Campus Community Gardens.

We purchased eleven varieties of peppers from the Beloit Greenhouse and Bonnie Plants. The varieties tested were: Sweet Banana, Revolution, Pimento, Summer Sweet, Vanguard, Camelot, Declaration, Yolo Wonder, Orange, New Ace, and Alliance. Each variety was replicated throughout the plot. The peppers were planted in June and continued to produce into October.

For each plant, the number of peppers and total weight of the peppers harvested were recorded. After the final harvest the averages across the plants for each variety were calculated. Over the summer a total of 69 pounds of peppers were harvested and donated to senior centers, family, and friends in several counties of the Post Rock District.

The Master Gardeners were very happy with the results of the trial. Even with the late planting date of June, the peppers were vigorous and produced large, great quality peppers. The varieties that had the largest yields by weight were the Sweet Banana, Summer Sweet, and Declaration. This was the second summer in a row for the Sweet Banana and Declaration to be top producers for the Master Gardeners. The peppers with the smallest yields were Alliance and Camelot.

Most of the peppers produced were traditional sweet bell peppers, but we mixed in a few fun varieties including Pimento. The peppers produced well and had great pest and disease resistance. Pimento peppers are unique heart shaped with one lobe at the base. You may know of this pepper from its use flavoring cheese and being used in the middle of green olives. The peppers have very thick flesh and a mild, sweet flavor. We also planted Sweet Banana peppers that were one of our top producing pepper plants. They are the six to seven inch yellow fruits that mature to an orange red color. These peppers are popular to eat fresh in salads or are often pickled to bring out their flavor.

The Master Gardeners started the local variety trials to give the community accurate information about which varieties produce well in the soil and environment of North Central Kansas. We hope to continue this project in the future so that home gardeners in the Post Rock District will have access to vegetable variety information and references specific to their home area, instead of state-wide or larger regional area averages.

Thank you to the Lincoln County Radish Patch for the support. The gardeners at the patch harvested 2,128 pounds of fresh produce this year!! Also a special thanks to Master Gardeners; Emilie Wacker, Jennifer Huehl, Greg Renter, and Susan Inskeep for their many hours working on the pepper trial and other Master Gardener projects.

If you would like more details about our pepper trial or would be interested in becoming an Extension Master Gardener contact Cassie Homan, Post Rock District Horticulture Agent, at (785)738-3597 or by email at [choman@ksu.edu](mailto:choman@ksu.edu)

*Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties. Cassie may be contacted at [choman@ksu.edu](mailto:choman@ksu.edu) or by calling Beloit (738-3597), Smith Center (282-6823), Mankato (378-3174), Lincoln (524-4432), or Osborne (346-2521).*