



Beetroot 'Badger' Series - Market Appeal

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Over a 16-year period, Nick Breitbach and Irwin Goldman worked on breeding low earthiness, low geosmin beets (*Beta vulgaris*) with yellow and red concentric cambial rings. This work resulted in the release of the 'Badger' series of table beets, including 'Badger Flame', which are now being used as a product for fresh consumption. These beets can be consumed raw as a sweet, crunchy snack.



Photo by Irwin Goldman

PROJECT GOALS

- ✓ Reduce earthiness
- ✓ Reduce astringency
- ✓ Concentric yellow and red rings

Problems Addressed

Beets are typically consumed following canning, pickling, boiling, or roasting. Additionally, many people don't like beets because they taste earthy; some feel they taste like dirt. To produce a cultivar that can be enjoyed fresh, it would need to be visually appealing, less earthy, and have lower astringency due to oxalic acid.

Solutions Developed

Nick Breitbach and Irwin Goldman bred a series of cultivars that were low in earthiness due to geosmin and astringency due to oxalic acid, and that could be consumed raw as a fresh snack. This series includes the popular 'Badger Flame' beet now carried in many grocery stores and used by restaurants in salads. By creating table beets that can be eaten fresh, the breeders hope this opens new opportunities for this vegetable.



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