

✧ Renee's Garden ✧

SUCCESS WITH SEEDS

reneesgarden.com

HOW WE CHOOSE OUR SEEDS



At Renee's Garden, we offer varieties grown by seed producers both large and small from all over the world and make our selections only after careful evaluation in our own trial gardens. We do not carry treated seeds nor will we ever handle genetically engineered varieties.

First and foremost, we work hard to find good, sustainable and organic growers with the skill and expertise to grow the high-quality, high germinating seeds we know we can count on and our customers will be successful with. We have close relationships with our growers, and many have become trusted friends. Many Renee's Garden varieties are listed as our "Exclusive," which means they are varieties produced only for our company and not available in other seed packet lines.

Every year in early spring, I set about finding new varieties and contracting with growers for the coming season for varieties we currently offer. I meet with our seed suppliers at least annually. While I do frequently travel to visit domestic suppliers and some of them also make the trip to visit our Northern California trial garden each season, I can sit down with many of our Asian and European suppliers at seed conferences. There's nothing like speaking face-to-face with folks you otherwise work with at a long distance most of the year.

I look forward to seeing our favorite growers from countries as diverse as France, Italy, Great Britain, Germany, the US, Japan, Thailand, Mexico and the Netherlands because I've known many of them for years. They know the kinds of vegetables, herbs and flowers we want to offer at Renee's Garden, so I can count on their recommendations. I've also been cultivating new relationships with good growers in Eastern European countries like the Czech Republic and Romania because of their large repository of heirloom varieties.

I use these meetings first to review our trial garden results, because most of our suppliers really appreciate the feedback on how their varieties do in our trial gardens in different parts of the US (Seattle, northern California, Florida, Vermont). The main part of each meeting is then devoted to hearing about, seeing videos of and discussing their new introductions and individual variety suggestions for evaluation at Renee's Garden.



While I always look for unique selections, my major criteria are still excellence in flavor, color and ease of growing and garden performance for home gardeners. I seek out different colored varieties of the same vegetable that we can combine in one packet for our special and economical "Rainbow 3 in 1" veggie packets. For our cut flower blends, I seek out shades that go beautifully together to cut for natural bouquets. I have to keep my unbounded enthusiasm under control, because I really love to talk about seeds and want to make the most of each visit without wearing out my welcome!

We also contract to buy seeds regularly from small local organic farmers who have the expertise to grow high quality seeds for us. I contact them individually to see which crops they have room for and make formal agreements for growing our seed for the next season. All our heirloom tomato varieties, for instance, are grown by these knowledgeable small seed producers in their family farms, most located in the agricultural valleys of northern and central California, Washington and Oregon. Generally we supply the basic "stock seed" of the variety to be grown, and they multiply these seeds for us, growing the amount we need, according to agreed upon seed quality standards and subject to independent seed lab tests for germination and purity.

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