

Broccoli

The well recognized health benefits of eating broccoli makes this crop important for market growers. Three varieties of broccoli were grown at the Horticulture Research Center (HRC) outside of Fort Collins, Colorado during the 2004 growing season. We grew one spring crop which was started in the greenhouse on March 29th. Seeds were planted into 72-cell trays filled with Sunshine No. 3 brand soil mix and topped with vermiculite to aid in keeping the seeds moist. Seedlings were fertilized once a week with fish emulsion fertilizer fed through an injector. They were transplanted at the HRC on May 18th into beds with 30" centers, in a single row at 10" spacing with one line of drip tape. Below are photos, yield data, and production notes for each of the varieties.

In our part of the country broccoli is transplanted rather than direct seeded because of flea beetle problems. Flea beetles will kill emerging brassica seedlings, and transplants are able to withstand the attacks. Effective organic controls for flea beetles include use of transplants and floating row covers. Approved pesticides for organic production are only marginally effective. Cabbage looper, Imported cabbage moth, and diamondback moth are also common pests and can be effectively controlled with Bt products or spinosad.

Variety selection is critical and the Specialty Crops Program plans on expanding varietal trials in 2005.

Photo	Variety	Average Head Weight (lbs)	Production Notes
	<i>San Miguel</i>	0.8 lbs/head (n=25 plants)	92% germination rate, two harvests (July 23, August 3), long stem facilitates harvest, few side shoots produced
	<i>Gypsy</i>	0.7 lbs/head (n=25 plants)	100% germination rate, two harvests (July 27 and Aug 3)



Arcadia

0.7 lbs.
(n=50
plants)

99% germination rate, three harvests with a relatively longer harvest window (July 27 - 20%, August 3 - 60%, August 12 - 10%) heads compact with greater degree of side shoot production