

The Australian National Vegetable Expo - 7-8 May 2009

In early May every 2 years Australian vegetable seed breeding and sales organizations gather to show growers the latest genetic material to improve their business.

One star attraction was the new Eazyleaf lettuce range from Enza Zaden. The Eazyleaf lettuce assortment was prominently displayed by South Pacific Seeds in perfect plots after some testing climatic conditions. The hot day temperatures at sowing time cooked a number of exhibitor's variety trials and the cool weather leading up to the event tested most varieties. The Eazyleaf plots received a great deal of interest from growers who are taking part in this exciting and rapidly expanding segment of the leafy salad market in Australia. Australian growers rapidly increased production of Eazyleaf types as growers have learnt how to maximize production, significantly improve shelf life, and improve the 3 dimensional structure of pre packed salads. The Eazyleaf range is available in green (Ezteban and Ezkiel) and in double or triple red (Ezmina and Ezra respectively). New and improved varieties are also added rapidly to the program.



South Pacific Seeds and Enza Zaden had Eazyleaf harvest guides available and a range of technical people to assist growers in crop scheduling, variety selection and variety discussion. The finer points of a varieties uniformity, depth of leaf serration, shelf life and pest or disease resistance were debated amongst the plots. The wide level of resistance to downey mildew or Nasonovia aphid resistance in the Enza Zaden Eazyleaf variety assortment was often referred to.

Endive was also on show to complement the Eazyleaf types. A new green variety on display from Enza Zaden had strong tolerance to bolting. The leaf is a little wider to increase yield and improve bulk.

It was very easy to compare varieties against competitor because the plots are side by side. After comparing the whole Nas and Dmr 1-26 resistance package and competitive pricing by Enza Zaden varieties to other Eazyleaf types, one grower wanted touy seed on the spot because as he told us "I'm all over it, you don't even have to sell it to me". 'There are too many advantages'. Mr David McDonald from South Pacific Seeds was very happy with interest generated by the field day and the strong assortment from Enza Zaden. He was very positive about the strong disease package new varieties have in light recent downey mildew pressure.

In addition to plot trials by the leading vegetable seed sales / R&D organizations there are also sites showing technology, irrigation, specialist planting, fertilizing, and cultivation equipment with practical demonstrations and tours of one of Australia's largest vegetable seedling nurseries. The rain off and on during the expo which made the hospitality tents more attractive and seemed to bring out more rain loving local growers. We look forward to the colour and excitement of the next Werribee field days to show the next generation of Eazyleaf varieties and the latest Enza Zaden field crops.

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Publication date: 5/26/2009

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