Growing Cool Crops Under Cover
Great Plains Growers Conference
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Explore alternative cool weather and/or interesting crops to grow under cover or in the field.
• Diversified family farm operation
• Started to grow alternative crops to maximize profit on the acres
• 14,000 sq ft of greenhouse space & 2700 sq ft of high tunnel
- Subsoil heating in greenhouses
- Boiler is heated by a corn furnace
- Double layer poly

Horticultural Crops Grown on Pheasant Run Farm

- Leaf Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Ginger
- Kale
- Cut Flowers
Basic Bed Preparation

- Optimal to plant into a stale seed bed
- Incorporate Sustane fertilizer
- Use plastic mulch
- Use row covers
- Drip irrigation

Salanova

- New green from Johnny’s Selected seed.
- Can start seed and transplant
- Excellent flavor, color
- Heftier leaf
- Handles cold very well
- Plant spring and fall
- Does not handle heat
Miniature snacking peppers
Seed available from a variety of sources
3 rows per 3 ft wide bed
2 ft spacing staggered
Trellis
Plant spring for season long production
Red peppers are smaller
Ginger

- Seed source—East Branch Ginger & Susan Anderson
- Similar to growing potatoes
- www.eastbranchginger.com also has excellent growing information
- 8-9 months to maturity
Lilies

- Pre-chilled bulbs
- Excellent for scheduling
- Sources are Ednie, Gloeckner, Abbott-Ipco
- Good for spring/early summer crops & fall
- Close spacing is OK
- Harvest when buds have color
- Remove stamens
Sunflowers

- Use a day length neutral, single cut variety
- Transplant plugs 2-3 weeks after germination
- OK to plant deep
- Good spring & fall
- Watch for aphids in spring
- Cut when petals are perpendicular to the center disk
Lisianthus

- Order plugs through Harris Seed, Germania, Glockner
- Order early—13 wk lead time!
- Can bump up or plant directly into soil
- Keep well-watered the first 10 days
- After that, lisi likes it dry

Lisianthus, con’t

- Group 1 is for late fall/winter flowering
- Groups 2-4 are spring/early summer, summer, late summer flowering
- Cut when 2-3 flowers are open. Fat buds will open.
- Cut long stems
- Will rebloom 1-2 more times.
- Must net!
Good Cool Weather Floral Crops

- Bells of Ireland
- Snapdragons
- Delphinium
- Dianthus
Interesting Outdoor Floral Crops

• Flowering Kale
• Get the variety specifically for cut flowers—Sun Series or Crane series
• Colors up in cool weather

• Pumpkin on a Stick
• Thornless variety available from Harris
• Defoliate after harvest
• Pumpkins will continue to turn orange after harvest

Sources for further information

• www.sustainablefarmer.com
• www.eastbranchginger.com
• Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers—www.ascfg.org
• www.practicalfarmers.org--webinars
Any questions?