

Cool Season Vegetables Grow Well

By DR. DINKEL

Cool-season vegetables grow extremely well in Alaska. They have the advantage as a crop of being useful for all magnitude of culture, from a tiny window-box salad garden to commercial scale fields inherent in large truck crop enterprises. High quality, cool-season vegetables have been successfully produced from selected areas in Southeastern Alaska to village settlements throughout all of Interior Alaska.

Vegetable seed catalogs have long been familiar to

many in Alaska, including prospectors, miners, trappers, and homeowners in remote areas whose link to civilization via the mail permits the seed order of winter to be transformed into a vegetable garden in the summer.

The vegetables that are most easily grown in Alaska include radishes, turnips, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts, peas, carrots, green onions, leaf lettuce, head lettuce, and rhubarb. Vegetables such as winter squash, cucumbers, sweet corn, snap beans, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant have been produced by utilizing special techniques and cultivars particularly adapted to Alaska's long summer photoperiods.

Seasonal greenhouse production of tomatoes and cucumbers is increasing. These allow the growing of excellent quality salad vegetables, and the acreage will increase for commercial and home uses as Alaska's population increases and production costs in the lower states increase.

Presently, most Alaskan grown vegetables are used for home consumption, are marketed in roadside stands on well traveled highways, or are delivered to retail outlets. Home freezers extend the

summer's production to year round consumption for the home gardener. Recent advances in extending the storage life of head lettuce have lengthened the marketing season and expanded the market volume of this perishable delicacy.

Plant breeding and selection efforts in the Alaska's environment with tomatoes, cabbage, and sweet corn have demonstrated the potentials of this tool in improving production in these latitudes.

A vegetable-processing enterprise in Alaska would result in greatly increased production of many-cool seasoned vegetables. Development of a processing industry has been thwarted by a limit Alaskan market, but with increased population in the state, and the trend toward increased pro-

duction cost in other areas, the volume needed will support at least a freezing industry. Current research in processing should also improve this potential.

The future for expanded production of vegetables in Alaska is at least as bright as for other segments of agriculture and may in fact surpass all others. It is well known to Alaskans, but poorly documented, that the flavor of most Alaskan produced vegetables is unsurpassed. Compared with "stateside" produce, Alaskan carrots, for instance, excel markedly in sweetness and succulence. Long photoperiods for photosynthesis, with short nights and cool that limits respiration, probably account for the heightened sweetness.

These Alaskan-grown

premium products, with organized processing, marketing and promotional inputs should have wide local, and significant export market potential.