

He Grows Peanuts, Cotton, And Rice In North Dakota

Marvin Baker raises peanuts 40 miles south of the North Dakota-Canada border. He also raises rice, cotton and okra. While the crops don't yield what they would in the South, they help keep the market gardener motivated as he plants and harvests dozens of other more traditional northern crops.

"When we started gardening in 2004, our goal was to add something interesting every year," says Baker. "We added peanuts in 2005 and have grown them ever since. This last year we added okra and found a good market for it, thanks to the U.S. Air Force base north of Minot."

Growing peanuts was a learning experience for Baker. He started out paying \$50 for 20 seeds. Seeds and advice came from peanut growers in southwest Ontario. He rotates them with other garden crops, sometimes planting them into the previous year's cover crops. Rows are planted on 50-in. centers, which matches his tiller width. Plants are spaced about 40 in. apart.

"We don't have any disease or pests that bother them," says Baker. "I get about a pound per foot of row. They are mushy when

I dig them with a potato fork. I have to dry them within 4 days or they will mold."

Baker spreads the fresh peanuts on screens. Fans placed underneath maintain airflow and blow away moisture.

Baker credits the Ontario growers and the Peanut Bureau of Canada for his success with peanuts. Similarly, he gives credit to the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society for helping him get his organic gardening business going.

"There is so much to learn, and networking with other people and getting to know what they have been doing is a great way to do it," says Baker, who continues to seek out information from all available sources as he explores new crops.

"I've been raising Red Foliated cotton for 8 years," says Baker. "I harvested my first boll in 2014. It yielded 16 seeds."

Baker starts many of his market garden crops in a commercial greenhouse before transplanting to his field. Next year he plans to add sweet potatoes. He will also add a hoop house where he can plant cherry and peach trees.



You don't expect to see peanuts grown in North Dakota, but market gardener Marvin Baker has been growing them since 2005.

Baker shares much of what he has learned in his book "Against the Grain." The eBook is available from www.heritagesonpublishing.com.

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Red Foliated cotton is another Southern crop that Baker grows.



Gary Leffler gave his 1957 Ford 860 a patriotic paint job to honor his family's military service. The work was done by custom motorcycle artist Sue Hopper.

Patriotic Tractor Celebrates His Family's Military Service

When Gary Leffler began restoring a 1957 Ford 860, his wife Jannell suggested he give it a patriotic paint job to honor military members in his family. Gary says the idea evolved into painting variations of the American flag on the fenders and hood, adding military mottos on the wheels, using military insignias, and a hologram of an eagle. A rattlesnake visual comes from the New Hampshire state flag with the famous "Don't Tread On Me" motto.

"They were painted by custom motorcycle artist Sue Hopper," says Gary. "Beyond that we honored all of my family members past and present by placing their names, along with when and where they served, on the inside of the tractor hood. Those names include vets who served in WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and the current war on terror. That includes my son, who served in the Middle East."

Hopper completed the painting in about a month and a half, just in time for Leffler to attend an antique tractor show. He has since taken it to Honor Flight ceremonies, displayed it alongside the traveling Vietnam Wall memorial, and attended a very special 4th of July celebration in Washington D.C.

"It was a tremendous honor to have our patriotic symbol at America's 2019 Independence Day parade and celebration in D.C.," Leffler says. "We had photos taken by the Capitol, near the Washington Monument, and with Midshipmen from the

Navy as well as soldiers in full uniform."

Leffler goes on to say that everywhere he takes the tractor people commend him on what a fine example of patriotism it is and thank him for doing the work. "Nothing makes me happier," he says.

Check out a video of the tractor at www.farmshow.com.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gary Leffler, West Des Moines, Iowa.

Mini Apples Make Great Snacks

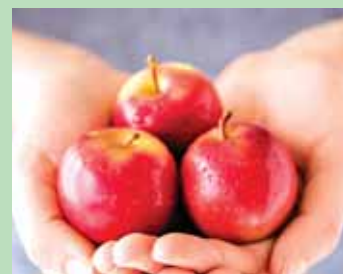
Rockit mini apples originated in New Zealand and are now blasting off in the North American market. Chelan Fresh owns the exclusive rights to grow, distribute and market the mini apple in Mexico, Canada and the U.S. The small apples are gaining popularity for snacking by adults and kids alike.

"We are selling them pretty much across the U.S.," says Tom Riggan, Chelan Fresh Sales. "Every year there has been more interest. The Rockit has a long shelf life and is a high brix (sugar) apple. Mothers like it for their kids as it is small, easy for them to eat, and they don't end up throwing out half an apple. They can eat the whole thing."

Chelan initially introduced the Rockit in tubes holding 3, 4 or 5 apples each. They quickly recognized that consumers preferred buying them in larger packages. They now are sold in 3-lb. packs.

Riggan indicates there are no plans at this time to sell Rockit seedlings to either the commercial or consumer markets. The company began marketing the apples as imports from New Zealand about 6 years ago while planting their own.

"After about 3 years, we had our first crop to harvest here in Washington State," says Riggan. "Gaining consumer acceptance required getting them to sample it. Once



Parents like Rockit mini apples for kids because they're easy to eat, but not too big to finish.

they realized it was a new apple and not a gimmick, it took off."

Riggan describes the snack apple as having a unique flavor, with the sweetness of a Fuji and a little of the Gala taste.

"It has a pretty dense, small cell structure that breaks off in chunks when you bite into it, similar to a Honeycrisp," he says. Suggested retail price for a 3-lb. pack is \$7.99.

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