BANANA: A YELLOW-FLESHED FINGERLING TYPE POTATO FOR HOME GARDEN PRODUCTION

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Abstract

Banana is a yellow-fleshed fingerling type potato characterized by a high set of small tubers. Tubers are banana-shaped, the usual size being 2-12 cm in length and 1-3 cm in diameter. The cultivar is of interest to home gardeners as quality for boiling or for salads is good. Certified seed stocks are being multiplied in Canada and the United States.

Compendio

Banana es una papa de carne amarilla, tipo pescado, caracterizada por una elevada formación de pequeños tubérculos. Los tubérculos tienen la forma de plátanos, siendo su tamaño normal de 2-12 cm de longitud y 1-3 cm de diámetro. El cultivar es interesante para los jardineros domésticos por su buena calidad para ser sancochados o para ensaladas. Reservas de semilla certificada vienen siendo multiplicadas en Canadá.

Introduction and Pedigree

The Banana potato has been grown in British Columbia (B.C.) for over 80 years. The history and origin of this small potato was researched by N.S. Wright, Agriculture Canada, British Columbia. Because of its appearance, Wright nicknamed it Banana. Some of the earlier history of

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Banana potatoes was recorded by Captain Evans-Atkinson, (past president of the B.C. Historical Society). The most acceptable version is that the potatoes were acquired by B.C. Indians and early settlers (mainly gold miners) from Russian fur traders. The potato accession laboratory at Vancouver obtained samples from Potato Mountain, near Bella Coola, B.C., Cedar City, B.C. and another location in B.C. Tubers from all three sources appear identical. The samples were all infected with PVM, which is common in some areas of Russia but rare in North America, lending support to the historical evidence that the selection may have come from Russia.

Although the small tuber size, accompanied by the small leaflet size, might lead to speculation that this cultivar is a diploid, H. De Jong (Agriculture Canada, Fredericton, pers. comm.) has confirmed that it is a tetraploid.

The multiplication and inspection of seed potatoes for sale in Canada requires that the cultivar is registered by Agriculture Canada. Data required for registration include comparative yields, tuber quality, plant description, photographs, total glycoalkaloid content, and reaction to infection by bacterial ring rot \( \text{Corynebacterium sepedonicum} \) (Spieck. and Kotth.) Skapt. and Burkh.]

Because of small tuber size and low yields this cultivar is of little interest to commercial growers, but it is being grown widely by home gardeners in Canada and the U.S.A. Registration was granted by Agriculture Canada in 1990 (#3277) and certified seed stocks are being multiplied and distributed by seed programs in Alberta and Ontario. This will ensure that gardeners have access to seed of an acceptable health standard, thus reducing the dissemination of non-inspected seed which could be a threat to the commercial potato industry.

**Description**

**PLANTS**—Growth habit: small to medium size, prostrate, spreading vines. Stems: uniform light green, no pigment. Prominent wavy wings. Leaves: closed, upper surface dark green (10GY5/8) (1), lower surface, light yellowish-green (10GY8/7) (1), reddish pigmentation where leaflets join midrib, slightly pubescent on upper surface and moderately pubescent on lower surface, pubescent leaf veins. Terminal leaflet: ratio of width to length 0.62, ovate with obtuse apex. Primary leaflets: ratio of width to length 0.60, three to four pairs, symmetrical, slightly larger than terminal leaflet, progressively smaller towards mainstem, pubescent petioles up to 12 mm in length, small tertiary leaflets on petioles. Secondary leaflets: numerous, small. Tertiary leaflets: up to 12 pairs, often not paired. Midribs: slightly lighter green than upper leaf surface, no visible pigmentation, slightly pubescent. Flowers: abundant blossoms. Pedicel and calyx very pubescent, uniform dark green, brown articulation, light yellow/green above and below articulation, calyx lobes 3-5 mm with acumen 2-6 mm. Corolla: large, rotate, medium pur-