Summer Lettuce Program
At Blue Gate Farm
Lettuce History at BGF

- Tapestry Salad Mix (April-June, Sept-Nov)
  - (2005-2015) 40+ varieties. Direct seeded, surface sown, knife harvested
  - (2015-2016) 40+ varieties. Direct seeded, Johnny’s 6-row seeder, knife harvested
  - (2016-present) 15-20 varieties. Direct seeded, Johnny’s 6 row seeder, used #1501 greens harvester

- Head lettuce, direct sown (April-June)
  - Jericho, PIC, Buttercrunch, Bronze Arrowhead, Little Gem, Red Rosie
  - Poor germination
  - Weedy
  - Immature bolting
  - Overgrown fall TSM
2017 Trial
Coastal Star
Magenta
Muir

2018 Trial #1
Concept
Magenta
Cherokee
Nevada
+
Kiribati
Rutilai

2018 Trial #2
Germination:
Magenta
PFI Trial History

2017 Summer Lettuce Trial - Jill Beebout, Carmen Black, Kate Edwards, Rob Faux, Alice McGary, Jordan Scheibel

2018 Summer Lettuce Trial - Jill Beebout, Carmen Black, Kate Edwards, Rob Faux, Jordan Scheibel, Jon Yagla

There was quite a variation in trial results farm to farm and each farm had their favorites. You can find all the details in the reports on the PFI website.

https://practicalfarmers.org/research/
2019 Summer Lettuce

- Antares
- Cantarix
- Concept ***
- Kiribati ***
- Magenta ***
- Muir ***
- Tapestry Salad Mix ***
Growing

- Only TSM is direct sown.
  - Mixed seed in 6-row seeder. 2 passes in 3’ bed, 3 passes in 4’ bed

- Head lettuce is tub sown every 2-3 weeks in 11.5” x 16.5” x 5” plastic tubs
  - .2 g raw seed per tub, single variety, yields 100-150 plants
  - .6 g pelleted seed per tub, single variety, yields +/- 100 plants

- Transplant when roots are well visible on tub bottom
- Divided and planted bare root.
- Hand-watered in, placed on drip tape.
- 12” spacing in row, 3 rows per bed (3’ or 4’ beds)
Harvest/Post Harvest

- First crop harvested in morning
- Dropped into lidded 18 gal totes
- Hydrocooled in packing barn
- Spun mostly dry
- Packed in plastic totes with drain screens
- Stored in walk-in cooler at 43°
Market

- Packed 25-30 large heads per cooler with ice packs (insulative paper & plastic)
- Display a limited number of heads or bundles in water pan (sunny side of the street)

6/15/19 7/13/19
Challenges

- Cucumber Beetles
- Tarnished Plant Bug
- Lettuce Looper Caterpillar
- Deer
- Sclerotinia
- Stress-induced bolting
- Bitter flavor
Benefits

- Customer Demand!
  - Market lettuce: 5/11/19-8/17/19
    - Only lettuce at market mid-summer (anecdotal from customers)
    - $4/ head, sold out weekly
  - CSA lettuce: weekly 6/11/19-8/13/19

Tornado damage 8/20 ended the summer lettuce season
Seed Sources

- Baker Creek
- Fedco
- High Mowing Seeds
- Johnny’s Select Seeds
- Osborne Quality Seeds
- Seed Savers
- Sustainable Seed Co.
- Territorial Seed Co.