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Mashua information and growing instructions

Ken Aslet is probably the best known of all mashua varieties outside the Andes, although as an ornamental, rather than an edible. It was reportedly discovered by its namesake at the Royal Horticultural Society garden at Wisley, UK as a volunteer seedling in the 1950s. It has been available in the US since at least 1978. This variety is more popular as an ornamental than as an edible, since most other varieties are much higher yielding and better flavored.

The Ken Aslet strain circulating in the USA tests positive for several viruses, including Potato Virus S and Potato Virus Y, neither of which has been previously recognized to infect mashua. I am cleaning up this variety and it won't be available again until that is done. I don't recommend growing this variety from any available source, including us. I'm sorry for the inconvenience. Because these viruses were not known to infect mashua, I never tested for them before 2018.

Culinary Traits

Ken Aslet is a pungent variety, with a raw flavor like horseradish pickled in cheap perfume. As usual, the cooked flavor is much more pleasant. Ken Aslet has a soft texture and a strong cabbagey flavor with a bit of bitter aftertaste. The flesh is light yellow and the color is retained when cooked.

Agronomic Traits

Ken Aslet is often claimed to be a day neutral variety, but I would describe it more as an intermediate daylength variety. It does flower and form tubers earlier than most other mashua varieties, but that means late summer rather than early fall. If planted very early, in February or March, it will sometimes flower in spring, although it usually stops and then resumes in summer. It appears to initiate flowering at day lengths below 14 hours. Tuber size ranges from less than an inch to about nine inches, but most are in the two to four inch range. Yields are low, usually between one and two pounds.

Although the specifics of its origin are lost to history, based on its appearance, I imagine one parent was a Peruvian variety of the type that is called "tears of blood". I also think it is likely that it resulted from a cross between two varieties, rather than a self-pollination, because the diversity of its progeny is much higher than most heirloom mashuas.

Price: \$8.50 - \$32.50

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Oca information and growing instructions

Bolivian Red is presumably a Bolivian heirloom variety, although I don't know any details about its origin. This variety is notable for its excellent, non-acidic flavor. Also sold under the name 'Rebo'.

Culinary Traits

Bolivian Red slightly sweet but not tart, a combination that often reminds me of things like squash and sweet potato, although it doesn't really taste like either one. The cooked texture is soft. Although it loses some color with cooking, it does retain quite a bit of it and remains red. This is a very attractive variety for raw use. When sliced, you get red and yellow discs, which look great in salads.

Agronomic Traits

Bolivian Red plants are intermediate in size and sprawl less than many of the larger varieties. Tubers are produced on stolons of intermediate length and usually do not crowd. Tuberation photoperiod is about 12 hours, the same as most heirloom varieties. Average yield is 1.2 pounds. The maximum tuber length is 4 inches and the average tuber length is 1.5 inches. Average tuber count is 36. There are about three times as many small tubers as large with this variety.

Bolivian Red is a moderate flowerer with a short-styled flower, flowering here from late June through August.

What you will receive:

Tubers

You will receive the stated number of tubers, packaged in a wax envelope. We grade tubers by passing them through a grate. Small tubers are those that won't fall through a 1/3" grate, but that will fall through a 1 inch grate. Medium/large tubers are those that will not fall through a 1 inch grate.

Seeds

Seeds are open pollinated. Because oca is a polyploid hybrid, the seeds will not grow true to type. They are suitable for use in breeding or conservation efforts and could be used to select varieties similar to the parent type.

Price: \$6.50 - \$12.00

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Oca information and growing instructions

This is an OSSI open source variety. Click for more information about open source seeds.

Redshift is a Cultivariable original variety, introduced in 2013. It is notable for heavy yield and excellent flowering.

Culinary Traits

Refshift has no tartness or sweetness and tastes very much like potato. The cooked texture is soft. It loses much of its color when cooked, becoming pink or even white.

Agronomic Traits

Redshift plants are among the largest of any variety that we grow, first becoming very tall and then sprawling. The tubers cluster under the base of the plant and may become crowded, producing irregular shapes. Tuberation photoperiod is about 12.5 hours, a week earlier than most heirloom varieties. Average yield is 1.8 pounds. Maximum tuber length is 5.2 inches and average tuber length is 1.6 inches. Average tuber count is 36. This variety produces about twice as many small tubers as large.

Redshift is an exceptional flowerer with a mid-styled flower, flowering here from June through October. It is consistently among the top three producers of true seed here, along with Siwash and Wishkah.

What you will receive

Tubers

You will receive the stated number of tubers, packaged in a wax envelope. We grade tubers by passing them through a grate. Small tubers are those that won't fall through a 1/3" grate, but that will fall through a 1 inch grate. Medium/large tubers are those that will not fall through a 1 inch grate.

Seeds

Seeds are open pollinated. Because oca is a polyploid hybrid, the seeds will not grow true to type. They are suitable for use in breeding or conservation efforts and could be used to select varieties similar to the parent type.

Price: \$6.50 - \$12.00

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Sockeye is a Cultivariable original variety, introduced in 2015, notable for relatively early tuberization and high yield.

Culinary Traits

Sockeye is a moderately tart variety, with what we might call the classic oca flavor, something like a potato with lemon or sour cream. Raw, it has attractive, shiny, red skin and light yellow flesh with a red core. It can be sliced thinly for raw dishes, which will produce disks with contrasting red and yellow rings. Cooked, the texture is very soft and the tuber will disintegrate with long cooking time. Like most oca varieties, Sockeye loses most of its color when cooked, usually becoming light pink.

Agronomic Traits

Sockeye plants are tall, with a large number of stems, and sprawling at maturity. The tubers are produced on relatively short stolons and cluster densely beneath the plant. This has both advantages and disadvantages. The tubers are easy to harvest, but because they are closely packed, many will have irregular shapes. Tuberization photoperiod is about 13 hours, making it two to three weeks earlier than most of the heirloom varieties. Average yield is 2.2 pounds. The maximum tuber length is 5.2 inches and the average tuber length is 2 inches. Average tuber count is 34. The distribution of tubers ranges pretty evenly from small to large.

Sockeye is a fairly poor mid-styled flowerer, flowering from late June to September here.

White Salmon

White Salmon is a somatic mutant of Sockeye that has lost all red color. It is white to pale yellow after exposure. Other than color, it is identical to Sockeye. We don't grow much of this variety and it is not available every year.

What you will receive

Tubers

You will receive the stated number of tubers, packaged in a wax envelope. We grade tubers by passing them through a grate. Small tubers are those that won't fall through a 1/3" grate, but that will fall through a 1 inch grate. Medium/large tubers are those that will not fall through a 1 inch grate.

Seeds

Seeds are open pollinated. Because oca is a polyploid hybrid, the seeds will not grow true to type. They are suitable for use in breeding or conservation efforts and could be used to select varieties similar to the parent type.

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