

**Title:** Guidelines for organic production of four processing vegetable crops

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**Abstract:** Farmers interested in transitioning acreage to organic production or diversifying their organic crop mix to include vegetables have had few resources to help them develop the nutrient, weed, and pest management systems necessary for successful organic production. Available resources tend to be scattered across various web sites and publications, or are embodied in the experience of researchers and successful organic farmers. Concerns about weed and pest management failures are often cited by conventional farmers as obstacles to undertaking a transition to organic production. To help farmers capitalize on interest from a major New York-based organic food processor in sourcing raw product in New York, and with funding from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, we have undertaken the job of coordinating the production of organic guidelines for four processing vegetable crops: snap beans, carrots, peas, and cucurbits. These crops were chosen because they are purchased in the largest volume by the organic processor.

**Background and justification:**

Farmers interested in transitioning acreage to organic production or diversifying their organic crop mix to include vegetables have had few resources to help them develop the nutrient, weed, and pest management systems necessary for successful organic production. Available resources tend to be scattered across various web sites and publications, or are embodied in the experience of researchers and successful organic farmers. Concerns about weed and pest management failures are often cited by conventional farmers as obstacles to undertaking a transition to organic production.

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Finding effective pest control products approved for organic production can be a challenge for farmers and extension staff alike. These guides will include this information, helping farmers understand their options and providing extension staff with resources for working with their organic audiences. The process of developing the guides also identifies gaps in organic production information, providing a roadmap for needed applied research.

**Objectives:**

- 1) Produce guides for organic production of carrots, peas, snap beans, and cucurbits.
- 2) Publish the guides on the web in pdf and html formats

**Procedures:**

1) Two part-time staff writers were hired to work on this project. The organic guidelines are based on the format of the Cornell *Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Commercial Vegetable Production*. The first step in creating the organic guidelines was to delete all practices and products not allowed for organic production from the chapters for each of the four crops. Cornell faculty and staff with expertise in production and pest management for the four crops were provided with copies of the “deleted” chapters for the crops in which they had expertise. Each crop group met to go through the documents and discuss crop and pest management practices allowed for organic production to replace those that had been stripped out. Participants also suggested other experts to consult and sources of information to search. Internet searches were conducted to find management practices for insect and disease pests for each crop, and an extensive list of references and links was developed. A set of common “background” sections were written by subject matter experts in collaboration with the staff writers to cover organic approaches to nutrient, weed and pest management, emphasizing the interrelated nature of organic production systems. Labels for Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) listed products were searched to find products labeled for each pest, and efficacy information from University trials was compiled for each pest/product combination. Live links to additional information and photos of insect and disease symptoms were embedded throughout the documents for use when viewing the html version online.

2) The guides will be published on the web at: [http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/org\\_guidelines](http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/org_guidelines).

**Results and discussion:** The guides are just being completed so we have not yet received feedback from farmers and other potential users.

**Project locations:** It is likely that the guides will be useful to farmers and extension staff throughout the Northeast and North Central regions, and they will be advertised widely once they are published.