

# SUPERSWEET CORN FROM HAWAII

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A new kind of sweet corn, known as Hawaiian Supersweet 4, was introduced into Papua New Guinea in October, 1970. It had been bred for tropical conditions in Hawaii and it was reported that it grew well there.

When it first arrived in Papua New Guinea, it was grown at Laloki and Keravat in the lowlands, and at Aiyura and Kuk in the highlands, for a number of generations.

It has a very sweet taste which most people like. The cobs are smaller than some other varieties.

What is the difference between ordinary corn, sweet corn and supersweet corn?

The kind of corn that is most widely grown by people in Papua New Guinea, and right through the whole world, is not very sweet. This is because the starch which makes up most of the grain is itself not sweet.

However, many people like ordinary corn varieties, and if this is your choice, there is no reason why you should change. But if you prefer a sweeter corn you may be interested in the new variety described here.

This new kind of sweet corn, Hawaiian Supersweet 4, has a very high content of sugar in the grain. The sugar content is about 10 times that of ordinary corn and four times that of sweet corn, and this is why it is called "supersweet".

Another good thing about this supersweet corn is that it does not lose its sweetness after it is picked. It also remains sweet after it is cooked.

What does Hawaiian Supersweet 4 look like? In the Hawaiian lowlands it is reported to grow nearly 3 m tall, but here in Papua New Guinea it seems to grow no higher than 2 m.

The supersweet plant does not tiller, that is, there is only one stalk. The cobs are quite normal in appearance at the stage when they are eaten, but as the grains become hard, they shrink and become wrinkled. This is shown in the picture on the next page, which compares grains of ordinary corn with grains of Hawaiian Supersweet 4. People may think that the hardened grains are no good for replanting, but this is not so. They will produce normal plants if the seeds germinate at all. If you plant 100 seeds probably only 60



Supersweet corn plant with cobs.

of them will grow into mature plants. But from these sixty plants you will get a good crop.

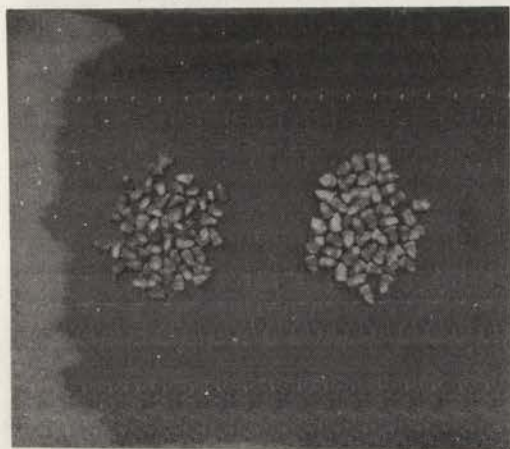
Will supersweet corn be useful? It is not intended that supersweet corn should replace ordinary corn entirely in Papua New Guinea. It is expected, though, that many people will want to try it out in their village gardens.

It should sell readily in town markets, especially as it does not lose its sweetness or softness after picking. It can be eaten uncooked, or it can be cooked by boiling, baking, or in a mumu, in just the same way as any other kind of corn.

In the bush, it could be used in much the same way as sugar-cane is used, for eating during long walks from place to place. Like sugar-cane, its high sugar content means that when it is eaten it gives a person energy very quickly.

How can it be grown? For best yields, Hawaiian Supersweet 4 should be grown at spacings of 1 metre by 30 cm. At this spacing you can expect two good cobs on each plant.

As already mentioned, not all the seeds planted will grow, so it is recommended that two seeds be placed in each planting hole.



Supersweet corn is shown on the left and ordinary corn on the right. The supersweet grains are smaller and may be quite wrinkled by the time they are ready for planting.

In the lowlands it takes about 60 days after planting before the corn is ready for eating, and about 90 to 100 days to obtain hardened grain ready for replanting. In the cooler climate of the highlands, everything takes a bit longer. There, the corn can be eaten about 110 days after planting, and the seeds will be ready for replanting after 140 to 160 days.

In most trial plantings, the variety has been fairly free from disease, except for minor

infection with common maize rust. However, in a wet season planting at Kuk, near Mount Hagen, it was heavily infected with leaf blotch disease. On the whole, it is not expected that any serious disease will affect the corn.

Hawaiian Supersweet 4 is an open-pollinated corn, which means that it is very suitable for village and home gardens, because it can be grown from its own seed and still remain true to type.

However, to avoid cross-pollination with other types of corn it must be grown at least 200 metres away from them.

Alternatively, the time of planting could be arranged so that it would not flower at the same time as other corn in gardens nearby.

Seed of Hawaiian Supersweet 4 is usually available from the Highlands Agricultural Experiment Station, Aiyura, Eastern Highlands Province; and the Lowlands Agricultural Experiment Station, Keravat, East New Britain Province.

This article first appeared in the *Post-Courier* in May, 1975.

### BETTER JOIN WAR AGAINST BUFFALO FLY

Hundreds of dung beetles have been let loose in PNG to battle the blood-sucking buffalo fly.

The buffalo fly sucks blood from cattle up to 40 times a day and up to 10 000 can settle on one beast.

The dung beetle was introduced as a result of a request from DASF to the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization.

Mr Ted Fenner, the Chief Entomologist, said that the dung beetle was introduced to decrease the buffalo flies, and also to increase dung fertilizer.

Dung beetles bury cow dung, so that the buffalo fly cannot breed in the dung. The buried dung increases the fertility of the soil.

Dung beetles have been distributed in the Central, Northern, Morobe, Madang and East New Britain Provinces.

DASF has its own dung beetle breeding laboratory in the Northern Province.

### PNG JOINS FAO

Papua New Guinea has become a full member of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization.

The Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Boyamo Sali, led a delegation to Rome in November 1975 to accept Papua New Guinea's admission at the 18th session of the FAO conference.

Mr Sali said FAO was carrying out technical aid programmes to the total value of K500 000 in PNG.

Papua New Guinea is anxious to play as full a role as it can in FAO, Mr Sali said.