

Breeding, Seed Production and Marketing of Vegetable Soybean in Japan by Snow Brand Seed Co., Ltd.

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Introduction

For the last decade in Japan, the domestic production of vegetable soybean shipped to wholesale markets has gradually decreased, whereas, importation of frozen and fresh marketable vegetable soybean from foreign countries has increased. The yearly average market price of vegetable soybean has gradually been decreasing for the past years. Therefore, it is expected that domestic production of vegetable soybean in Japan will be low these following years.

However, our company has engaged with breeding, seed production and sales of vegetable soybean seeds and maintains a top market share in Japan. We will continue to support the producers and develop better varieties in the future.

Breeding

Our company was established in Hokkaido in 1950 and made use of its good weather condition for seed production. We started vegetable soybean breeding earlier than other companies specifically on white hair vegetable soybean variety named Sapporo-midori. This variety was introduced in 1974 and spread nationwide, making a big market share by our company.

We give emphasis on the needs of the growers and give in to their requests. We make confirmations on the characteristic evaluation of the seed and apply it to their cultivation conditions (Figure 1 and 2) to meet the taste demand of the consumers.

The following are some of the vegetable soybean varieties with their corresponding characteristics that we had developed.

1. **Sapporo-midori.** This was developed in 1974. It is a crossbreed of Kogen-midori and Hokuiku no.1. It has a sweet taste and is an early maturing variety. It is considered an old but famous outstanding variety.
2. **Yukimusume.** This was developed in 1977. It is a crossbreed of Hakucho and Hokuiku no.1. It has a high yield potential, has also a sweet taste and is a mid-early maturing variety. It is also considered a famous outstanding variety.
3. **Misono-green.** It was developed in 1977. It is a crossbreed of Hakucho and Hokuiku no.1. It has a high yield for pods and has a sweet taste.
4. **Kitanosuzu.** It was developed in 1982. It is a crossbreed of Toyosuzu and Hakucho. It has many 3 seed pods. It has good standing style not like other varieties.
5. **Sayamusume.** It was developed in 1990. It is a crossbreed of Sappori-midori and Yuzuru. It has very dark green pods. Among the mid-early maturing varieties, it has the biggest pods.
6. **Haru-no-mai.** It was developed in 2000. It is a crossbreed of Hakucho and Hokuiku no.1. It has a good potential in low temperature climate. It has many 3 seed pods and is a new, very early maturing variety.
7. **Sayakomachi.** It was developed in 2001. It is a crossbreed of Sapporo-midori and Yuzuru. It has a good pod color. It has less green color than Sayamusume but has a more outstanding color than other varieties.

Seed Production and Quality Control

As stated earlier, our company has carried out seed production mainly in Hokkaido, where the weather condition is very suitable for production of high-quality seeds. After harvest and drying of the vegetable soybean by the seed grower, a severe check is done on the quality specifically on its uniformity, water content and size of the seed. Whereas, checking the size of the seed depends on the variety.

Green house and plastic tunnel cultivation sometimes causes low germination rate due to low temperature, which is considered as a big point in the growing of vegetable soybean. In this effect, in addition to high-quality seed production, our company pioneered to offer germicide treatment of seeds for farmers.

Marketing

Marketing of seeds in our company is generally through retail stores and agricultural cooperative associations. We do not deal with individual retailing but do variety seed promotion and technical advise to individual farmers so that they will purchase our seeds from the retail stores and agricultural cooperatives. We do not just sell seeds but also look into the cultivation method of the farmer as well as provide technological advice. We establish good relationships with the farmers so that we can find and cope up with their necessities.

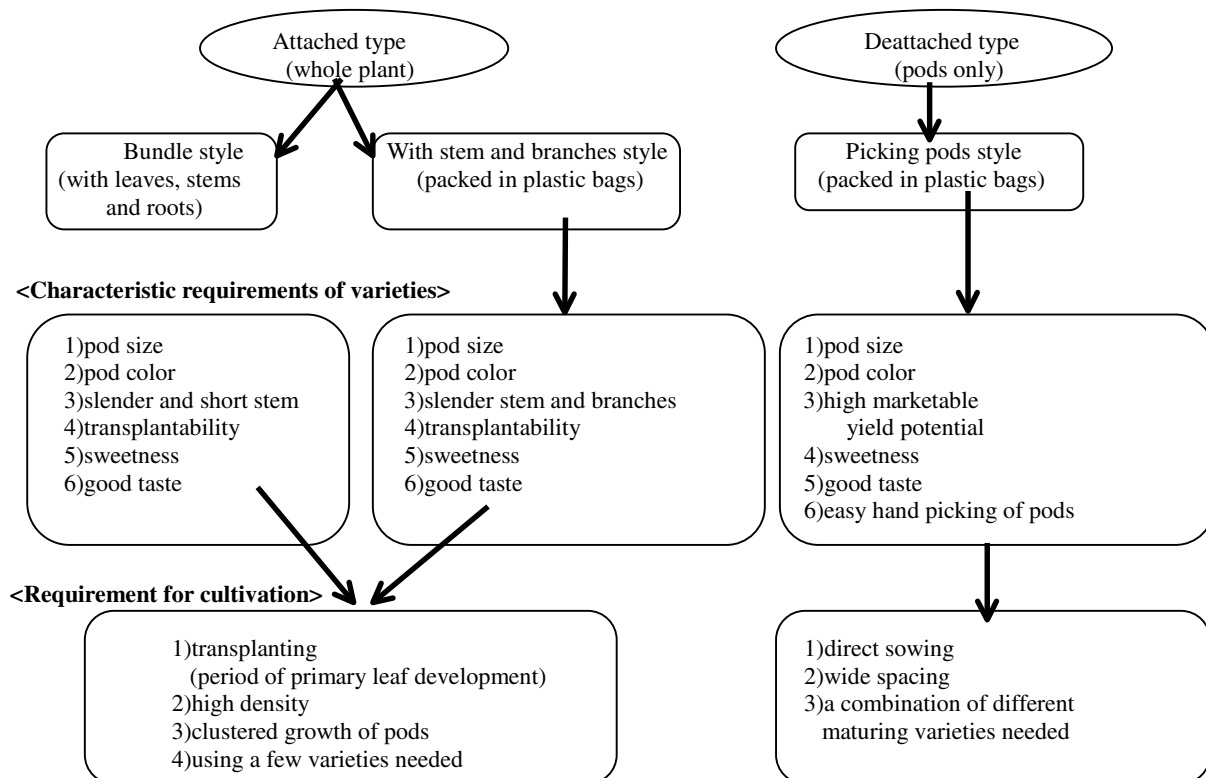


Figure 1. Different shipping methods, characteristic and cultivation requirements of vegetable soybean in the Japan market.

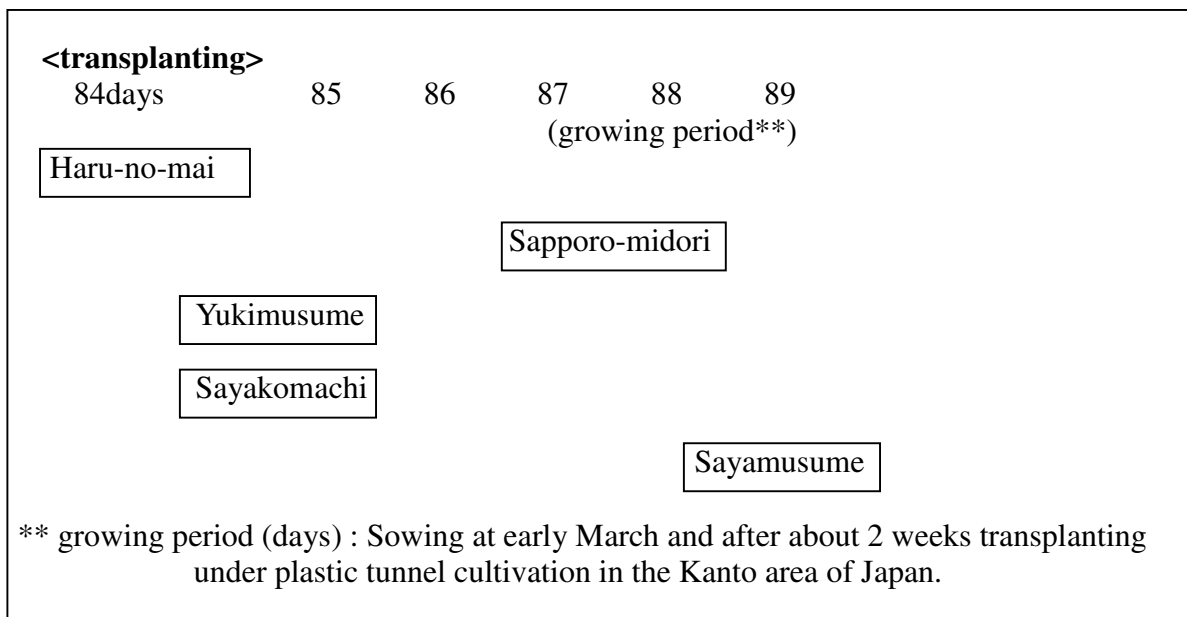
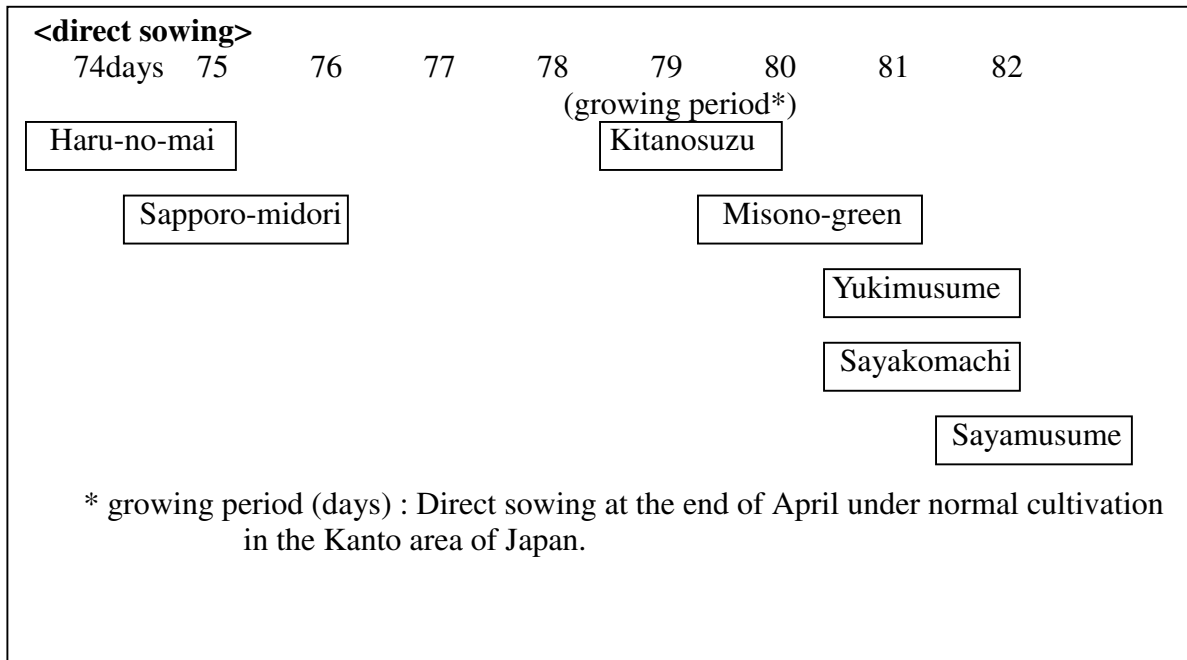


Figure 2. Maturity of the different varieties by direct sowing and transplanting