

# HARRIS® SEEDS

## Superior Product, Fair Price

How many companies can say they have been around for 128 years? I can't name many, but one that can claim they have is Harris Seeds, based in Rochester, New York. Harris Seeds was established in 1879 by Joseph Harris as a catalog seed operation and for over 100 years was managed by Harris family members, until 1979 when it was sold to corporate ownership. Another transition took place in 1987 when the company was sold to private owners who still run the business today with 40 full time employees and 60–70 seasonal workers.

When I spoke with Dick Chamberlin, President of Harris Seeds, I asked, "What sets your company apart from other seed and supply businesses?" According to Chamberlin, "I think at least two things, first — quality. We were the first company to test for germination on every lot of seed and print the results on every package. We have an in-house germ-testing lab to ensure superiority with our product. Secondly, we pride ourselves on our service to our customers and building relationships with the growers."

One customer that can attest to Harris's high level of service is Harry Hicks of Townville, PA. Harry has only been a customer for about a year, but says "We have worked closely with the sales people...my family recently moved and they were very helpful in making suggestions of what species we should try and alternatives to those that didn't do well at our location. They also have a wide selection of organic and untreated seed."

Customers of Harris Seed spread across all 50 states with a majority of those in New England, New York and Pennsylvania. "We definitely tend to focus on the middle sized and small growers, which accounts for about 80% of our sales. The other 20% comes from the two Harris Seeds salesmen that travel throughout the Northeast. These growers are often more interested in high quality, fresh market vegetable varieties," says Chamberlin.

In addition to seed and grower supplies, Harris also sells plug and liner transplants. "This system has actually become more efficient with both labor and energy costs," says Chamberlin. Instead of growers starting their own transplants in the greenhouse in January/February, they order pre-started plugs, grow them on in the spring, and are ready to sell in a few weeks. A greenhouse owner in Honesdale, PA has been a Harris Seed customer for 20+ years, noting they are the only seed company she deals with.

Ethan Phillips of Waynesburg PA, who owns a greenhouse/nursery operation, is one of Harris's newer customers. "A friend passed a catalog on to us. It has been great working with them so far, their service has allowed me to track shipments and find culture resources."

What other unique items does Harris offer? "Our ornamentals (flower) selection is growing with the use of cuttings from various species. Also we have a large selection of disease resistant vegetable varieties. Pumpkins are probably our biggest seller, especially the varieties that are resistant to powdery mildew and crop destroying viruses." Chamberlin continues, "We strive to provide the finest products at a fair price." ■



For 128 years, we have been supplying growers in the Northeast with the very highest quality seeds, plants and supplies. For a free copy of any of our Professional Grower catalogs below, call us **Toll-Free 800-544-7938** or visit us on the web: [www.harriseseeds.com](http://www.harriseseeds.com)

2008 Professional Ornamental Growers' Seed Catalog  
2008 Professional Ornamental Growers' Plug & Liner Catalog  
2008 Professional Vegetable Growers' Catalog  
2008 Organic and Untreated Vegetable Seed Catalog

**HARRIS® SEEDS**  
*A Grower Friendly Company*

**Toll-free: 800-544-7938 • [www.harriseseeds.com](http://www.harriseseeds.com)**

355 Paul Road, PO Box 24966, Rochester, New York 14624-0966