

News from Switzerland

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The following are some of the best varieties available in Switzerland today.—

Norli: Very early, 60 cm high, excellent for refrigeration.

Swiss Dwarf: Novelty, very early, near 50 cm high, soft pods.

Nordland: Another variety, this is the earliest of all; extra big pods and very soft. Height, 150 cm.

Golden König: The pods of this variety are approx. 14 cm long and 3½ cm wide; when ripe the pods are golden yellow and sweet as sugar.

Swiss Giant: Special hybrid, with big, long and soft fleshy pods. Very prolific on healthy plants, the pods are up to 15-20 cm long and very wide. Height, 180 cm (85 days to maturity).

For further information concerning these varieties and any of the Continental-known vegetables write to: Samen Mauser, Rathausbrücke, Postfach 8022, Zurich, Switzerland.

Seeds can be obtained from friends or relatives in Switzerland as well, and at arrival checked by the Custom authorities. There is only a small duty-free formality to perform when seeds are coming into this country. One should, before making purchases, make inquiries with your local Department of Agriculture. The people in these offices are only too keen to help anyone who is in need of information.

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SPACE AGE MINSTRELS

The Bernese song is an institution comparable to the Föhn, an Alpine wind, or the Kornhauskeller, a traditional restaurant in the basement of the old granary. At its inception some fifteen years ago there was Mani Matter, then a high school student, now a well-to-do-lawyer and family man. His first song dealt with an earthworm. Mani Matter strummed on a guitar while singing his songs. Bernhard Stirnemann, Fritz Wiedmer and Ruedi Krebs were his first disciples. Hugo Ramseyer took them to the "Theater am Zytglogge", the "Theatre at the Clock Tower", Berne's oldest basement theatre where in no time they conquered the heart of the basement audience with song programmes of the Bernese teachers' cabaret "Schifertafele" ("Black-board"). The press was enthusiastic and at that time coined the name "Bernese Minstrels", today so well known in Switzerland's federal capital.

The original minstrels have it made. The gas metre reader and the streetcar driver whistle their tunes. Each of the minstrels has cut several records. In the meantime — and that is very nice —

the success of the older generation has been an incentive to young men. There is already talk about a second generation of Bernese Minstrels. Markus Traber is one of them, so is Oskar Weiss, Peter Krähenbühl and Jacob Stickelberger. And the guitar makers smile a happy smile . . .

The Bernese Minstrels sing of every-day life in Berne, of a foggy evening, of the Elfenau (an old estate in their home town), of love that blossoms between the bear pit and the railroad station, of the hot chestnut vendor who augurs the coming of winter. Or they create in their often scurrilous ballads new Bernese types such as Katie who works at the Tobler plant and therefore smells of chocolate. In the songs of his minstrels the Bernese finds an expression of his innermost feelings. (snto)

ACTIVITY ON NORTHERN SLOPE OF MT. EIGER

Cracking and hammering sounds come from the northern slope of Mt. Eiger but this time these sounds are not made by Japanese, Australian or other alpinists trying to drive their pickaxes into the rock, according to reports from the Bernese Oberland Tourist Office in Interlaken. The noise is caused by the construction of no less than two chair lifts and one ski lift under the famous northern slope of Mt. Eiger. They are called "Gummi", "Arvi" and "Honegg".

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