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Development of a pumpkin variety HORDI-Pu -1 having good fruit quality attributes

Ranjani Peiris* and S P Inrasena

Horticultural Crops Research and Development Institute (HORDI), Gannoruwa, Peradeniya

Pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata* Poir) is considered as a minor crop in Sri Lanka. However, it is a valuable source of nutrition, particularly micronutrients and the highly beneficial phytonutrients. The most rational and sustainable strategy to prevent micronutrient deficiency is to ensure production and availability of nutrient rich vegetables at low prices to the consumers. This study was initiated in 1999 at Horticultural Crops Research and Development Institute with the objective of developing a promising pumpkin genotype having good fruit quality characteristics. The new pumpkin variety HORDI-Pu-1 is developed through inbred selection procedure from a local segregating population. It has vigorous vegetative growth and trailing habit. The fruits are uniform non ridged oblong shaped and medium size (1.5 kg/fruit). Rind colour is light brown when mature. The fruit cavity diameter is 8.2 cm whereas in recommended "Ruhunu" cultivar it is 11.5 cm. Flesh colour of HORDI-Pu-1 is golden yellow indicating its richness in carotene. Yield is about 30 t/ha. The performance of this variety in research and farmer fields indicated that it is better than the recommended cultivar Ruhunu, based on yield potential, disease resistance and good fruit quality characteristics. It has field resistance to downy mildew, tolerance to cucumber mosaic virus and powdery mildew. The palatability tests confirmed that it is highly accepted and preferred by the consumers. This is a promising variety for a national release in near future.

*peirisranjani@yahoo.com

Tel: 081-2388011-12