

# 2020 Heirloom Tomato Plants at Topmost Herb Farm

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Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday – May 1 thru June 30 – 9am to 5pm

*It's all about taste! The term "heirloom" is loosely defined as plants grown by generations of gardeners whose saved seeds produce plants with consistent traits. Discover the marvelous intense and varied flavors from all corners of the world and join us in our gratitude to those anonymous seed savers. Be prepared to trellis or stake your plants, as all except the container tomatoes are vigorous indeterminate growers, which means they will continue to grow and produce fruit until frost kills them*

Seeds are planted in organic potting mix at Topmost in March

Transplanting into quart containers occurs in April

Plants are usually in blossom by early to mid-May depending on the variety

Sales of plants begins in May; however, our favorite planting day is Memorial Day

Plants are \$4.75 each, tax included

You may reserve plants in advance by sending your list to [carole@topmostherbfarm.com](mailto:carole@topmostherbfarm.com)

Be sure to include your full name and email address for confirmation of your order

Pay for your plants when you pick them up (note our hours at the top of this page)

**Healthy soil makes healthy plants – Have you had your soil tested?**

**Tests may be obtained at your local UConn Extension office or CT Ag Experiment Station**

## Red and Pink Slicing Tomatoes

### **Birch Mountain**

Thanks to the efforts of generations of hard-working Italian farmers on Birch Mountain in Bolton this seed has become available to us. The prolific plants produce meaty, blocky, delicious tomatoes with an abundance of fruits that serve well as fresh slicers or sauce makers. Tomatoes are sold at the Morra farmstand on Birch Mountain.

### **Box Car Willie**

This multi-use old timer is a prolific yielder, with true old fashioned flavor. Heavy mid-season yields of smooth, beautiful, red-orange fruits, averaging 10 to 16 oz. will last throughout the season for canning, freezing, and eating fresh.

### **Brandywine**

Big flavor is the reason this Amish heirloom from the 19<sup>th</sup> century remains available. Large, rich tasting fruit is borne on vigorous vines and is often irregularly shaped. It is sometimes subject to catfacing, a physiological disorder of bands of dry, dark lesions on the shoulders which are harmless.

### **Cosmonaut Volkov**

From the Ukraine, these plants are sturdy and productive and the large fruits have a sweet/tangy flavor and positively celestial taste that is always good, occasionally sublime. Named by a Russian space engineer who was an avid gardener, for Russian cosmonaut Vladislav Volkov, who perished on a return flight from Earth's first space station.

*(more red and pink slicers on the next page)*

### **Costoluto Fiorentino**

Thank you, Susan and Jane for bringing these seeds back from Florence, Italy. Our American packs are puny by comparison. These flattened and ribbed tomatoes have concentrated flavor, making them an excellent choice for sauce or fresh slicing. The robust plants produce fruits with outstanding taste.

### **Ligurian Oxheart**

This heart-shaped Italian tomato is revered by Italian farmers in the region of Liguria. It was awarded the designation "Heart of an Ox" in appreciation of its massive fruits, smooth skin and marvelous taste.

### **Mortgage Lifter**

One of the best heirloom stories ever! Charlie Byles operated a garage in West Virginia in the 1930s and was famous for repairing radiators and also for his passionate dedication to growing and breeding great tomato plants. He sold them to customers for \$1 each, and paid off his mortgage in a few short years. This stunning tomato usually weighs in at over 1 pound, with delicious bright red flesh.

### **Prudens Purple**

It remains a mystery how Prudie got the purple part of her name, with her pink skin and red flesh! With her silken texture and rich flavor she's a popular choice in the Northeast. Dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, she is tolerant of cool and challenging conditions and sets her fruit rather early. The one pound fruits have irregular shapes and few seeds.

### **Rutgers**

Developed in 1928 by Rutgers University for Campbell Soup Company, this heavy producer of medium size fruit, juicy with marvelous old-fashioned flavor. Introduced to the public in 1934, but by the 1970s farmers wanted fruit with shipping hardiness (and less flavor) and Rutgers was lost. With a rise in awareness and demand for heirlooms, many folks remembered Rutgers and original seed was located and reintroduced. We grow the original.

### **Thessaloniki**

A Greek transplant introduced in the 1950s. Very productive plants with good disease resistance yield medium sized fruits with outstanding flavor. Useful both in salads and sauces.

## **Tomatoes for Sauce**

*Often used as slicers, but with less juice, these paste tomatoes are perfect for cooking.*

### **Amish Paste**

A Wisconsin heirloom from Amish farmers in the 1870s. Always popular, especially for canning, the large meaty fruits weighing up to 8 oz. have thick, bright red flesh with consistently good flavor even in poor growing years.

### **Anna Russian**

From Russia to Oregon to us. Quantities of heart-shaped fruit abound on these robust, hardy plants. Early and luscious, they are superb both for cooking and eating fresh.

### **Fiano da Avellino**

Another winner from Birch Mountain in Bolton! This tomato originated in South Central Italy. The fat, beefy fruit is excellent for sauce and delicious in a sandwich. Tomatoes are sold at Tony Fiano's farmstand on Birch Mountain.

## Tomatoes for Sauce *(continued)*

### **Grandma Mary's**

These 6-10 oz. fruits are very early for their size and the plants produce fruit even during cold summers, probably due to the fact that they originated in Sangerville, Maine. Excellent for sauce.

### **Opalka**

This Polish heirloom was brought to New York around 1900 by the Opalka family. The fruits are large, with few seeds, mellow and full-bodied. The sturdy plants produce abundantly. A favorite among tasters at the original Coventry Regional Farmers' Market as well as their vendors.-

### **San Marzano**

Many chefs consider this their favorite paste tomato. It was already an heirloom in its native Italy, believed to have arrived in 1770 as a gift from the Viceroy of Peru to the kingdom of Naples. It was planted in the volcanic soil in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius and years later was assured of a premier place in Italian canneries. The flesh is thick, with few seeds and a strong sweet taste.

### **Speckled Roman**

These eye-catching psychedelic-looking fruits boast rich tomato sweetness and good texture. The red cylindrical fruits are covered with orange-yellow striations and there is usually an early abundance of meaty 4-5 oz. fruits. Delicious for both eating fresh and cooking.

## Purple/Black Tomatoes

### **Black Krim**

Don't wait too long to harvest this delicate Russian tomato. They are dead ripe and delicious when half green and still firm. The strikingly iridescent purple skin with dark green/black shoulders often has some catfacing which renders it less beautiful, but still perfectly safe to eat. The meaty flesh is dark and unusually juicy. It has been described as having a smoky flavor like a good single malt Scotch.

### **Cherokee Purple**

This unusual variety comes from Tennessee, originating with the Cherokee Indians and it dates back to 1890. Slightly oblate fruits average 10-13 oz. and sunburn easily, so prune the plants sparingly. Dusky brownish/purple skin, dark green shoulders and brick red flesh. With its big rich taste, it is often referred to as sweet, juicy and winey.

### **Japanese Black Trifele**

This incredible petite fruit, shaped like a little pear, hardly looks like a tomato with its dusky burgundy skin and green shoulders. At only 4 to 6 ounces it is a bit large to be a cherry tomato, yet surely a small slicer. Superb taste all on its own but also delightful and strikingly beautiful in a mixed salad with other heirlooms.

### **Paul Robeson**

This Russian heirloom has that distinctive, sweet, smoky taste with a tang and is quite an extraordinary tomato named after an extraordinary man. Paul Robeson was a talented athlete, scholar, singer, actor, linguist and crusader for American racial equality and social justice. Usually early, slices of the 6 to 12 oz. black/brick red fruits with green shoulders make a memorable sandwich.

## Yellow/Orange Tomatoes

*For a yellow cherry tomato, see Blondkopfchen in the Cherry Tomato group.*

### **Dr. Wyche's Yellow**

Introduced to Seed Savers Exchange by the late Dr. John Wyche, owner of the Cole Brothers Circus, who fertilized his tomato plants with elephant manure. The glowing tangerine/orange fruits average 1 pound, and have a smooth texture and tropical sweet taste.

### **Goldie**

The electric Kool Aid, Low Acid Tomato! This large, full-flavored orange tomato is a favorite for eating fresh. It is stupendously rich and possesses a velvety texture. It dates back to the 1870s.

### **Lillian's Yellow**

A Tennessee native whose fruits mature late in the season, but are well worth the wait. Large tomatoes are bright yellow, with meaty, dense flesh and few seeds. This excellent slicer has great rich and complex flavors that are unusual for yellow-fruited varieties.

## Green and Multicolor Tomatoes

### **Big Rainbow**

This lovely heirloom was preserved through the efforts of Seed Savers Exchange. A rainbow when ripening with green on the shoulders, yellow in the middle and red on the blossom end. Huge fruits can often weigh up to 2 pounds. Delicious and extra sweet, when sliced their flesh is yellow with neon red streaks. Remember; huge fruits often mean fewer fruits.

### **Green Zebra**

A most unusual beast in the tomato menagerie! Their exquisite taste is mild, tart/sweet, with a hint of lemon. Don't wait too long to harvest them, as they are ready to eat when they are still firm. Yellow/green skin with dark green vertical stripes and emerald green flesh.

### **Pineapple**

Quite a beautiful tomato, often weighing 2 pounds or more. A Kentucky native with a uniquely mild, low acid fruity sweetness, its striped skin reveals flesh with yellow and red marbling make them almost impossible to resist.

## Container Tomatoes,

*These plants can flourish in a large pot with drainage. Place them in direct sun and water consistently. They are determinate plants that produce their whole crop at once.*

### **Crimson Sockeye**

A dwarf plant that produces large yields of 4 to 10 oz. medium sized tomatoes usually in approximately 90 days. Well-balanced flavor in a slightly ribbed, pink smooth skinned fruit.

### **Chocolate Lightning**

Among the taller growing vigorous dwarf varieties, these plants produce excellent yields in approximately 80 days of chocolate colored tomatoes with jagged green and gold stripes. The rich crimson flesh has the intense flavor of dark tomatoes.

# Cherry Tomatoes

## **Black Cherry**

These dusky, perfectly round one-inch fruits are incomparably sweet, juicy and delicious. The favorite on the Topmost cherry tomato list for many years. In Texas, they appear in the supermarkets from Mexico early in the season, and are a local favorite.

## **Blondkopfchen**

From East Germany, her name means “little blonde girl.” One plant can yield a phenomenal amount of ½ inch brilliant yellow/gold cherry tomatoes in large clusters. Undoubtedly one of the best tasting cherry tomatoes; deliciously sweet with a slight citrusy tart finish. Great for introducing tomatoes to kids who claim to dislike tomatoes.

## **Matt’s Wild Cherry**

Matt was a survivor of the many blights affecting tomatoes in the 2018 growing season. Small fruits borne in clusters on heavy producing vines. Introduced to the US from Hidalgo, Mexico. Pick them frequently, as their skin is thin and cracks easily.

## **Principe Borghese**

Larger than most cherries, these plum shaped, ruby red beauties dry beautifully, retain their flavor and are excellent for thickening sauce. Their delicious flavor is rich and deep with few seeds and little juice.

## **Red Zebra**

It’s impossible to resist the unmatched taste of these clusters of small fruits growing on vines often reaching 6 feet. Their bright scarlet skin is streaked with orange, gold and yellow and often a random streak of green.

## **Sun Gold**

Here’s the ringer of the list, since she’s a hybrid. Included here because of intense flavor and a whole legion of admirers. The small fruits are incredibly sweet, borne in prolific clusters and ripening to a rich apricot color. They are a local treat since their tendency to split precludes shipping.

## **Tiger Tom**

This tiger is orange with red stripes, early and rather large, with an incredible taste that is never bland.

# Husk Tomatoes

*All husk tomatoes have light-brown, papery husks (calyxes) that cover the maturing fruits. The 2 most common cultivated species are the ground cherry and the tomatillo. Both have been cultivated in Central and South America for centuries. They are vigorous growers, self-sow readily and are best caged or trellised, spaced 2-3 feet apart.*

*Ground cherries are so named because the cherry-sized fruits are borne near the ground. The leaves are hairy or fuzzy and the plants grow 1-2 ft. tall with lateral spreading growth up to 4 ft. They are eaten fresh, or used in desserts, sauces, preserves, fruit toppings, pies and salads.*

## Husk Tomatoes (continued)

*Tomatillos are larger-fruited, typically 1-3" diameter and the plants grow 2-5 ft. tall with smooth leaves. They are usually cooked to bring out their full flavor; simmer for 5-10 minutes in a pot of water, then use in chili rellenos, salsa verde, guacamole, and other sauces and dips.*

### **Aunt Molly's Ground Cherry**

A Polish heirloom. Smooth, marble sized fruits are indigenous to the high altitudes of South America, eventually finding their way to Europe in the 18th century. They have a sweet and tangy citrus flavor ending with a hint of vanilla. Abundant harvests of golden fruit are enclosed in papery husks turning green to yellow/brown, dropping to the ground when ripe and continuing to sweeten while waiting to be harvested. Add them to salads, smoothies, preserves, pies, and even dry them like raisins. When stored with the husk on they can last a month.

### **Tomatillo Verde**

Standard richly flavored type with deep green fruit. For salsa, these popular tomatillos tone down the spicy chiles and help blend the other flavors. Huge yields.