



# Heirloom Tomatoes

*...historical novelties, a passing, yuppie fad, or ???*

In fact, heirloom tomatoes are unique, old-fashioned (and delicious!) varieties that may carry in their genes a remarkable story about an Indian tribe, a hardscrabble Appalachian farm or someone's great grandmother from Ukraine. Heirlooms, (or "heritage" varieties) were commercially abandoned in the last century in favor of laboratory hybrids - for their alleged disease resistance, vigor and uniformity. But, diligent seed saving practiced by generations of nameless farmers, seed savers and backyard growers over the ages helped preserve and rescue hundreds of these rare, "open-pollinated" varieties from obscurity—allowing us to re-discover and enjoy their living legacy today! If you're a lover of tomatoes, but haven't yet discovered the heirlooms, take a closer look. We think you'll be surprised.

In an age of genetic modification and corporate "ownership" of our staple seed crops, the resurgence of heirloom vegetables (as well as fruits and livestock) is neither fad nor accident. Heirlooms represent part of a healthier food paradigm marked by a return to traditional, earth-friendly and sustainable methods of land management and food production. We organic gardeners and other denizens of mother earth won't cede away bio-diversity and the right (indeed, responsibility!) to save and plant our own seeds. We will continue the age-old practice of selecting, storing, studying and disseminating the best genes of our valuable crops. Local seed saving initiatives like this are technically simple and within the reach of any small farm or garden. Practicing and promoting in-the-field crop selection and seed saving by gardeners and growers and supporting regional seed "conservancies" and "banks" not only enhances community food security, it preserves delicious pieces of living history along the way.



**...Granted, heirloom tomatoes are groovy-looking and unusual -- and could possibly help feed a hungry planet – but, really now, HOW DO THEY TASTE?**

...Simply put: the best heirlooms consistently possess, hands-down, superior flavor, sometimes described with words like, "idiosyncratic, fruity, suggestive" and "complex". Also, contrary to rumor, many heirlooms tend to be easy to grow, disease-resistant and highly productive. Some heirloom tomato varieties, we should add, can be prone to anomalies of appearance such as cracking and uneven ripening, which might make them less fit for shipping. No matter, all the multi-colored, exotic 'maters we grow will be gratefully consumed close to home, either by shareholders or us, fresh, sauced or dehydrated for the winter. At LDF we've trailed and tasted over 75 tomato varieties and are now distributing a handful of our very favorites. Get to know the heirlooms and, like us, you may find yourself saving seeds from those favorite, fall fruits! Stay in touch for more info on alternative tomato propagation and heirloom seeds. ~Laughing Dog~



## Laughing Dog's Favorite Heirloom Tomatoes

**Persimmon Orange**: an enormous, rich, cosmetic, productive, hardy, fleshy, orange “steak” with immense flavor and few seeds... Another amazing, heirloom monstrosity!

**Aunt Ruby's German Green**: A rich, obscenely sweet, large, green-when-ripe tomato. Leaves “Zebra” in the dust. Ask any grower or connoisseur. Rumored to be a modest producer. Not so here at *LDF*. This is a “must grow” =)

**Eva Purple Ball**: A vigorous, prolific, versatile, cosmetically “perfect”, pink to purple-red orb. Chosen originally for the name's sake. Now there are three “*Evas*” in my family!

**Orange Banana**: A highly attractive, oblong, orange, Roma-type with a “banana-like” appearance and excellent quality flesh and flavor. Superb for sauce, salad or eating out of hand... Another vigorous, prolific and *indeterminate heirloom gem*...

**Cherokee Purple**: A highly unusual and now popular cultivar grown allegedly by the Cherokee people. Purple with green shoulders and a smoky, complex flavor. Often a shy cropper, but well worth the trouble!

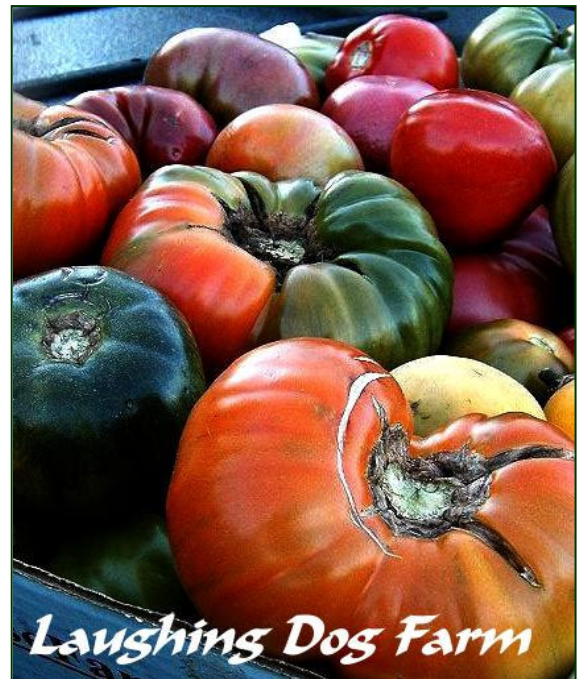
**Pineapple**: An enormous, golden yellow, fleshy, trophy-worthy fruit with blood red, interior streaks, usually on the blossom end. This stunner is vigorous, disease-resistant, candy-sweet, gorgeous, unusual and productive – the *whole package*. We love “*Pineapple*”!

**Blonde Fig**: A wonderful, sweet, yellow, teardrop or plum-style (salad or table) gem. Too juicy for sauce, still BF is extremely handsome and prized in the heirloom basket.

**Roman Candle**: A green-on-yellow, “wobbly pin-striped”, tapered, Roma-style, very attractive, tasty fresh, for paste or sauce. Unusual, and can be prolific...

**Chadwick Cherry**: A robust, round, red, cherry tomato with excellent flavor and sweetness - also vigorous, disease resistant and prolific. Selected by Alan Chadwick.

**Ruby Gold**: A very large, slightly heart-shaped, yellow treasure, frequently with a subtle, red, interior blush. I'm a BIG fan of this incredibly tasty, fleshy, versatile beauty!



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