

Slow Farm's Ark of Taste Tomatoes

Note: some of these we grow every year and some we rotate in different years.

[Amish Paste](#)

Amish Paste tomatoes have a delicious balance of acid and sweetness and a firm, meaty texture. Good for eating as is or in sauces, they are among the first to ripen in summer and among the last to give out in the fall. They are usually teardrop or heart-shaped with a brilliant red orange color and can be quite large. This heirloom tomato was discovered in Wisconsin although its origins are in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the heart of the Amish Country.

[Aunt Ruby's German Green](#)

Aunt Ruby's German Green is among the most delicious of all heirloom tomatoes, with a fruity flavor, silky flesh and thin skin. It is bright grass green when ripe with a golden or pinkish tinge at the bottom, a large beefsteak type tomato that often weighs one pound or more. Named for Ruby Arnold whose family grew these in Greenville, Tennessee.

[Burbank](#)

The Burbank tomato, released in 1914, was named for the famous horticulturalist who developed it, Luther Burbank. This tomato has a classic taste that is acidic yet sweet. The fruits are fairly small and uniform, with a carmine red color. Some say that it is also especially nutritious.

[Chalk's Early Jewel](#)

Chalk's Early Jewel tomato is among the first to ripen in summer. It is a smallish, round, deep red tomato with a "remarkably fine sweet flavor." It comes from Norristown, Pennsylvania where it was created in 1899 by James Chalk.

[Cherokee Purple](#)

The Cherokee Purple tomato is a huge favorite among tomato lovers and has a unique dusty rose color with a sweet rich and smoky taste. The Cherokee Purple was rediscovered by tomato grower Craig LeHoullier after he grew out seeds he got from a Tennessee native who said his neighbor's family had grown them for 100 years after receiving seeds originally from Cherokee people.

[Djena Lee's Golden Girl](#)

Djena Lee's Golden Girl tomato is among the earliest of the tomatoes and has a sweet, mild flavor. Short stocky plants are covered in golden orange globes that resist cracking and blossom end rot. This prolific tomato was developed in the 1920s in Minnesota by Djena (pronounced "Zshena") Lee, who was part Native American and the daughter of financier Jim

Lee. She gave seeds to a Reverend Morrow in 1929, and it has been grown by his family since then.

[German Pink](#)

The German Pink tomato has a full, sweet, even floral, taste with a tender skin. The large 1-2 pound meaty fruits have few seeds and are extremely versatile - excellent for canning and freezing and also for slicing and juicing. The German pink tomato is a Bavarian variety that comes to us from Festina, Iowa.

[Inciardi Paste](#)

The Inciardi Paste tomato is among the rarest of all heirloom tomatoes, and is remarkable for its wonderful tomato flavor and for its full body when cooked down into a puree for sauce. Since 1900, it has only been grown in the Chicago, Illinois area where it is not bothered by the heat and droughts common there. The varietal name is "Inciardi" is not its ethnic name, but was assigned by the seed saver Vicki Nowicki. She was given the tomato decades ago by the son of the Henry Inciardi who had brought it to the United States from Sicily in 1900.

The Inciardi Tomato was brought through Ellis Island with the Inciardi family when Henry was a very young man. The family carried with them from Sicily their entire food supply in the form of seeds. Fearing that the seeds would be confiscated by the authorities at Ellis Island, they sewed them into the clothing of the family members.

[Ivan](#)

The Ivan tomato, an extremely rare heirloom, is an explosively delicious tomato with plants that can bear up to 50 pounds of softball-sized red orbs. These hang on the vine through drought, flooding and extreme heat, invulnerable to the type of molds and fungi that plague similar breeds. The Ivan tomato was grown for generations in Missouri but its cultivation slowed until only one family, the Scheurenbergs of Ashland, MO, was growing it. The Ivan tomato has come back twice from the brink of extinction to serve an important purpose: it is helping to heal veterans with PTSD and it has also inspired two small community businesses, one of which began working to revive the Ivan tomato in 2016.

[Livingston's Globe](#)

Livingston's Globe tomato is a three-inch rose-red fruit with a good yield. Pretty and pale, it kicks you in the mouth with a lot of flavor but the taste doesn't linger. High in acidity, it is sour and very juicy with an old-fashioned taste. This could be a good canning tomato because of its high acidity and may be good as pizza sauce - striking enough to support ingredients while holding its own. Originally introduced in 1897 by the famous Ohio tomato breeder A.W. Livingston.

[Livingston's Golden Queen](#)

Livingston's Golden Queen tomato is a pale yellow medium-sized fruit that develops a pink blush on the bottom when ripe. According to A.W. Livingston, he examined a very pretty yellow tomato at a county fair and the grower gave him one. He took special care to preserve, test and improve it. After a number of years he introduced it and in 1882 gave it its current name to give it wider circulation. He called it the best flavored tomato in existence.

This tomato has a light fruity aroma and a nice thin skin. It is meaty with a nice acidity, leaving a little sting on the tip of the tongue and a long lingering finish. It slices very well. This tomato incorporates all the pleasures of a red tomato with a lovely golden color.

[Orange Oxheart](#)

The Orange Oxheart tomato is a family heirloom from the Virginia region of the US. This fruit has a deep orange skin and dense orange flesh. It is heavy and heart-shaped and can grow to a large size, often weighing in at one pound or more. The meat of the tomato is dense with a rich aroma. This heirloom tomato has superior flavor and its meatiness makes it excellent for salsas and canning.

[Radiator Charlie's Mortgage Lifter](#)

This large pinkish beefsteak tomato is very meaty with few seeds. It has a spicy flavor and low acidity. The taste starts off mild and then builds, with a long finish on the palate. It has a roasted, fruity and slightly salty flavor.

The Mortgage Lifter tomato was developed by M.C. Byles (who went by Charlie) of Logan, West Virginia in the 1930s. Charlie owned a radiator repair shop and had no plant breeding experience - this tomato was the only breeding work he ever did. Charlie took 10 tomatoes and put them in a circle with a German Johnson tomato in the center. He collected pollen from the 10 outer tomatoes in a baby's ear syringe and then squirted it on the flowers of the German Johnson. After seven years he had a stable tomato with the qualities he wanted. He was a good marketer and sold his seedlings for \$1 each. After 6 years he was able to pay off the \$6,000 mortgage on his house. Although almost unknown now, this tomato's story has helped keep the strain alive.

[Salzer's Ferris Wheel](#)

Juicy, slightly sweet, and deliciously complex, Salzer's Ferris Wheel Tomato shares some similarities with the typical beefsteak tomato, but with a much finer flavor.

Released by the John A. Salzer Seed Company of La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1894, this intensely flavored tomato was once prized for its uniquely large size. From the 1895 Salzer Seed Company Catalog, "This monster, this leviathan, this giant, measures almost 2 feet in circumference. We studied for an appropriate name and finally concluded to name it Ferris Wheel Tomato, in honor of one of the greatest inventions of the age. This Tomato possesses every good quality to be found in a Tomato. The vines are strong and vigorous, and easily bear their enormous weight of fruit, and when we come to giant size, weight, solidity, no other Tomato

begins to approach it.” Despite this colorful description, Salzer’s Ferris Wheel Tomato was dropped from the catalog in the 1940s due to competition from new varieties.

This variety was essentially extinct until Craig LeHoullier, author of *Epic Tomatoes*, brought it back by ordering seeds from the USDA collection in 1999. A representative from Victory Seeds reports, “Although none of the fruit we have grown out are true ‘monsters,’ we have harvested ones weighing in at thirty two ounces... but a pound seems to be a typical specimen weight.”

[Sheboygan](#)

The Sheboygan tomato is a pink 4-6 oz. drop-shaped paste tomato that is good fresh or for canning. Its delicious flavor is more similar to heirloom varieties than to paste tomatoes. The complex flavor has a great balance of sweetness and acidity. Sheboygan has been grown since the early part of the 20th century in Sheboygan, Wisconsin by Lithuanian immigrants.

[Sudduth Strain Brandywine](#)

The Sudduth Strain Brandywine tomatoes are large (up to 2 pounds), pink, beefsteaks with an incredibly rich, delightfully intense tomato flavor. When ripening on the vine its flesh bulges out of its skin. This strain was obtained by tomato collector Ben Quisenberry of Big Tomato Gardens from Dorris Sudduth Hill whose family grew it for over 100 years.

[Valencia](#)

The Valencia tomato is a round, smooth fruit with a brilliant orange color and has an excellent, full, complex tomato taste, with a great balance of acid and sweetness. It has been described as bursting with flavor, rich and buttery as well as pineapple-like, sweet and refreshing. It usually weighs in around 8-10 oz. It is a mid-season indeterminate tomato that grows well in northern and cooler climates. It is a family heirloom from Maine. Some say it is called “Valencia” because it looks like a Valencia orange, while others suspect it came from Valencia, Spain. It is not one of the famous heirlooms, which makes it hard to find and one of the most threatened varieties.

[Red Fig](#)

Red Fig got its name in Philadelphia in the 1800s when these small pear shaped tomatoes were used as a substitute for dried figs “by gardeners who would pack away crates of dried tomatoes for winter use.” Prolific as well as sweet and mild, Red Fig is good fresh.