

Supporting the Rhythms of the Seasons

2014 CATALOGUE INTRODUCTION

Dear Gardeners and Seed Savers: Welcome to the Solstice Seed Catalogue, now in its sixth year! I'm writing this just a couple of days before the Winter Solstice, a time when all our instincts tell us to slow down, consolidate our energies, and enjoy the fruits of last season's gardening bounty. This is the only season in the year when we simultaneously look both backward and forward. We are on a cusp, reflecting on experiences and observations of the past year, and imagining ways to fine-tune our mission and make our gardens and the world a better place in the coming one.

It has become routine for me to comment here on the idiosyncracies of weather in the past season. And this year was no different. Unusually hot weather in early spring, followed by endless cool rains in early summer, then hot, humid late summer days, and a later-than-ever first frost.

What does this mean for our ability to grow our own food? What do we need to look for in the varieties we select? How do we balance and diversify the selection of crops we grow to guarantee that at least something will thrive and we'll be able to fill root cellar and pantry with basic foods that will feed us throughout the winter? Increasingly we need to assume that weather patterns will be unpredictable, erratic; often extreme; our gardening practices need to take this into account as what we've come to call "the new normal". Diversity matters more than ever.

Even as my rotations fill to bursting, it is nearly impossible for me to resist experimenting with new varieties or new growing techniques in an ongoing effort to expand the selection of the varieties we are able to grow in the Upper Valley that will feed us year round and help us adapt to changing conditions. Priorities include identifying widely adaptable varieties that thrive under different conditions or contribute to a body of staple foods that store for long periods.

As has been true from the beginning of Solstice Seeds, though, you will find in these pages only open-pollinated varieties. This means you can save seed from any variety offered, and I strongly urge you to do so. Get the book *Seed to Seed* by Suzanne Ashworth, the most complete and comprehensive book in print on the basics of seed saving. Start slowly, learn one species at a time so you don't feel overwhelmed, and begin with what you most like to eat! From there you can expand your collection to varieties that have interesting or local histories, are rare or endangered, have extraordinary flavor or keeping qualities, or simply have enticing names!

What you will not find in these pages is a complete selection of everything you want to grow in your garden. This project is seed-driven. Varieties will come and go from the catalogue depending on what seed crops have been successful in a given year, or what crops are most in need of growing out for either trialing or preservation. Having said this, I am constantly working to expand what it's possible to grow in Hartland, and above all what it makes sense to grow in a home garden. To that end, my neighbor farmer Brian and I are hoping to have our first crop of carrot seed next year and perhaps a crop of Lacinato kale seed. Wintering over plants in his high tunnel greatly increases our chances of success and our ability to hold over the necessary number of plants for seed production. But my annual admonition bears repeating: if you see something you like in these pages, get it now and learn to save its seed; it may not be in the catalogue next year.

SEEDS IN OUR "LINE UP", FROM LEFT TO CENTER:

AMARANTH	LETTUCE	CRESS	ONION	TOMATO	SPINACH	BEET	PEA	BEAN	BEAN
<i>Hopi</i>	<i>Rougette</i>	<i>Shallot</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Jaune de</i>	<i>Winterspinat</i>	<i>Golden</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Marfax</i>	<i>True Red</i>
<i>Red Dye</i>	<i>du Midi</i>		<i>Bunching</i>	<i>Chardonne</i>	<i>Haldenstein</i>		<i>Arrow</i>		<i>Cranberry</i>

Brian and I have begun a number of collaborative projects in the past year. We conducted melon trials, identifying a couple of varieties that ripened—and had terrific flavor—even in this year that was disastrous for melons. The availability of his fields permits us to grow adequate populations of crops like cucumber, squash, and corn that require larger parent populations for quality seed. I am hoping, over time, to hand over to him preservation of some of my varieties, freeing me up for new trials. This is a model of cooperation that it would be wonderful to replicate in other parts of town. One vision is that we could develop community-wide partnerships between farmers and gardeners in order to maintain collections of seeds that form the underpinnings of a local year-round food supply and keep those seeds available to other members of the community.

Last summer I conducted a trial of 17 different pea varieties, including shell, snap, snow, and soup peas. There were remarkable differences in flavor, growth habit, disease resistance, maturity dates, and productivity. And even in physical appearance. One variety, Manitoba, has a veritable bird's nest of frizzy tendrils.

Rice trials continue. Four varieties produced viable seed this year. Having just read about the System of Rice Intensification—a yield-increasing method of growing rice that is applicable to other crops as well—I hope to fine-tune my techniques next year for greater success.

In an ongoing effort to identify herbs and spices we can grow close to home, I planted fennel *selvatico* this year. This is a non-bulbing variety of fennel—a perennial in warmer climates—that produces the aromatic seeds we are familiar with from Italian sausage. However, once you sniff the anise-like perfume of these seeds you will be able to imagine many more possible uses.

Saffron, the most expensive spice in the world, is in fact not that difficult to grow here. The dried stigmas of the fall-blooming crocus are a classic ingredient in many Mediterranean dishes such as Spain's paella, France's bouillabaisse, and Italy's risotto. I've planted about 25 of the diminutive corms in plastic flowerpots—drilled for drainage and sunk into the garden bed to protect them from the winter invasions of mice—and was able to harvest the first slender threads in October.

As is customary in this catalogue introduction, I want to continue to encourage you to avoid any foods that might contain genetically engineered ingredients. Evidence continues to emerge about the dangers to human and animal health from these foods and feeds. The risks of contamination of non-GMO crops are already widely known. Contrary to industry claims, herbicide application has increased with the introduction of GMO crops, leading to the predicted rise in glyphosate-resistant weeds. Read all food labels carefully. If corn, soy, cottonseed, or canola or any of their byproducts are listed, and the food is not certified organic, simply don't buy it. If you are really dedicated, call the company and say you love their product, but won't buy it until they can guarantee their food is free of GMO ingredients. And, of course, get as much of your food as possible from the farmer you know.

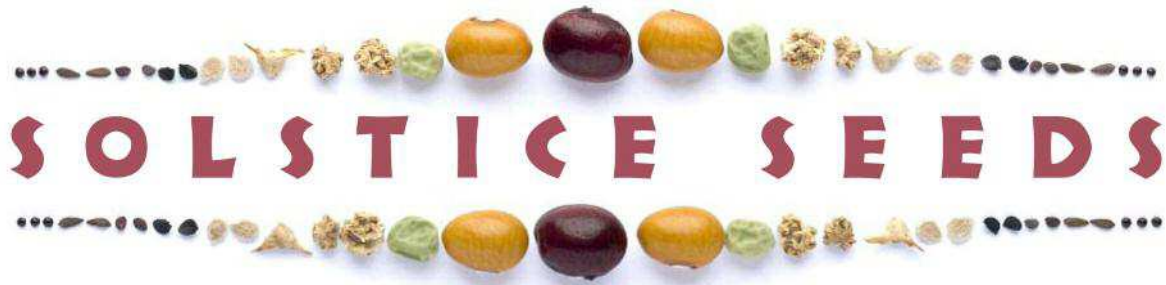
The tide is turning against the insanity of these crops, with measures before a number of state legislatures requiring labeling of foods with GMO ingredients. California's Prop 37 was narrowly defeated last year, thanks to millions spent by industry groups to spread misinformation. But in the wake of that, about 40 new groups formed around the country to introduce legislation requiring labeling of GMO foods. Vermont's own H.112 passed in the House last year by a wide margin and will go before the Senate in January. Vermonters can come to Montpelier on January 16th for the GMO Labeling Rally and Lobby Day. Check out www.vtrighttoknow.org for details.

The madness does not end there. Legislation is coming up in the EU that would make seed saving in the home garden, and the sharing of seed among individuals, illegal. This is no joke. Only vegetable varieties officially registered would be permitted. This is under the guise of ensuring that any variety sold openly under a specific name would be guaranteed to conform to the description of that variety, whereas in fact it would lead to the loss of hundreds of traditional, heirloom, and landrace vegetables. Fortunately, activists in Austria have already succeeded in compelling that country's EU representatives to reject the legislation. So the urgency to grow and maintain our own seeds is greater than ever. Start this year!

And finally, once the growing season begins, my attention needs to turn completely to the garden and it becomes very difficult to fill seed orders. Therefore, I'm instituting an ordering deadline this year. **Please anticipate your seed needs for the entire season since I will accept orders only until June 1st.**

Thanks so much for your support of this work. Wishing you many pleasurable hours planning next summer's garden.

Sylvia



2014 SEED CATALOGUE

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AMARANTH

500 seeds per packet

Hopi Red Dye. *50 days to edible leaves, 120 days to seed.* One of the most ancient of grains. A vegetable and seed amaranth of striking beauty. The entire plant is deep burgundy red. Young leaves are delicious in salads or quesadillas. Flower bracts were used by Hopi Indians as a ceremonial food dye. The leaves have 3 times more vitamin C, 10 times more carotene, 15 times more iron and 40 times more calcium than tomatoes, and 3 times more vitamin C, calcium, and niacin than spinach leaves. Plants reach 6 feet and require ample space to develop fully.

Opopeo. *108 days to seed.* A fast-growing variety from Opopeo, Mexico, this gorgeous leaf and grain amaranth can grow to 9 feet and branch heavily. Leaves are greenish red on top, burgundy red on their undersides, stems are bright red. Plant thickly, then thin for eating. Absolutely delicious, creamy flavor sautéed with olive oil and garlic. None of the bitterness of spinach. Seed heads are huge and bright red, but produce white seed, which is then easy to distinguish from chaff during threshing. Succession plant later in the season exclusively for eating.

Orange Giant. *100 days to seed.* A seed amaranth with orange-ribbed green leaves and huge burnt-orange seed heads. Loads of light beige, easily threshed seed on plants that reach 7 feet. Amaranth has 16 to 18% protein. The seed can be popped, added to hot breakfast cereal, or baked into bread.

BEAN/BUSH/DRY

30 seeds per packet

Black Coco. *85 days.* An heirloom that is essentially a multi-purpose bean—edible in the green or shell stage—but exceptional as a dry bean. The plump, round, glossy black beans, held in 6-inch pods, cook quickly and are delicious in soups as well as bean salads, where their rich flavor is well expressed. Height is about 18 inches, the pods resist shattering on the plants but are easy to thresh.

Black Manitoba. Well-adapted to cultivation in a cool, damp season, this bean is technically a half-runner, with vines up to 3 feet. Given proper support, this is a very prolific variety. The seeds are small and jet-black, looking exactly like Black Turtle and numbering up to 8 in very easy-to-thresh pods. My seed comes from a Mennonite seed saver in Michigan.

Black Turtle. *85–105 days.* One of the most popular of soup beans. Small, shiny, flavorful black beans. Plants are somewhat heat and drought resistant, untroubled by insects or disease. They appreciate some support but will need it less if given adequate spacing. Classic for black bean soup, outstanding in black bean hummus or bean cakes.

Cannellino Lucchese. *85–90 days.* A variety of cannellini bean, the classic white Italian kidney bean used in so many traditional Tuscan dishes. This one comes from the area around Lucca, renowned for its fine olive oil, where it is typically used in farro soup. My seed comes originally from an Italian seed saver.

Drabo. *85 days.* An heirloom from Switzerland, this high-quality, plump, white soup bean is about the same size as cannellini, but slightly rounder. Flavorful, productive, and cooks quickly.

BEAN/BUSH/DRY (*continued*)**30 seeds per packet**

Hutterite Soup. *85 days.* Brought to America by the Anabaptist Hutterites who came from Austria and settled in Canada in the 1750s, this outstanding, creamy-textured soup bean is small, almost round and pale greenish-yellow in color with a dark ring around the eye. The plants show some runners, there are 5 to 6 beans per pod.

Littleton. Another half-runner which will require support for the 4-foot vines. The name refers to Littleton, New Hampshire, the bean was called “an old New Hampshire heirloom” by renowned plant breeder Elwyn Meader. The pods have the streaking of a horticultural bean, but the seeds are unusually large. Beige background with wine-colored mottling, some of the beans are almost solid red. A very productive variety.

Marfax. *80–85 days.* A versatile, small, almost round, caramel-colored heirloom from Maine, resembling Swedish Brown, but earlier and higher yielding. Well adapted to our cool climate, this richly flavored bean holds its shape well during baking.

Montcalm Dark Red Kidney. *105 days.* An early strain of Red Kidney, these brilliant, deep raspberry-colored beans make excellent chili, bake well and are perfect in soups. The sturdy pods with 6 to 7 beans each are borne on upright plants that are mold-resistant in damp weather. Also good as a green shell bean.

Schwarzwälder Ausmachbohne. A beautiful dry bean from the Black Forest region of Germany. Its strong, rather leggy, 20-inch plants are happiest given lots of room. The dry beans are sulphur yellow, fairly large, and cook very quickly to a tan color. The subtle flavor is a perfect vehicle for combining with lots of onion, garlic, tomatoes, sage, and hot pepper.

BEAN/BUSH/SNAP**30 seeds per packet**

Astrelle. *50 days.* A French filet bean with excellent beany flavor and high yield on compact plants. Unlike many filet beans, it will produce continuously right until frost except in very hot summers. Best picked at about 3 inches, but it will remain tender long after that.

Comtesse de Chambord. An extremely rare, diminutive filet bean from the 19th century, originally known as Hungarian Dwarf rice bean. The pods are very slender and only 4 inches long, growing on plants no more than 12 inches tall. A steady producer throughout the season of tender, sweet snap beans. The tiny white beans, barely larger than grains of rice, can also be used dried. An excellent variety for the small garden or for container growing.

Flambeau. *85 days to shell stage.* A rare French flageolet bean for eating at the shell stage, when the seeds have begun to fill out in the pods but haven't become starchy yet. Pale green or white sweet, tender seeds in 5-inch pods on 18-inch plants. Great for eating fresh, steaming and freezing, or using as a dry bean. Very productive. Flageolet beans were introduced in France in the late 1870s.

Marché de Genève. *60 days.* A Swiss variety from ProSpecieRara—the Swiss seed saving organization—with large, tender, stringless, very flavorful, deep green, straight 5-inch pods on strong plants. Violet/black seeds. An excellent market variety. Follows Astrelle and will also produce over a long season.

Maxibel. *50 days.* An outstanding filet bean. Very slender, perfectly straight 7 to 8-inch medium green pods borne heavily on sturdy plants. Early and productive for the entire season, superb flavor. Seeds are narrow, tan in the background with dark, purple/brown splotches.

BEAN/BUSH/WAX**30 seeds per packet**

Beurre de Rocquencourt. *60 days.* Named for the French town of Rocquencourt near Versailles, this productive and beautiful bean lives up to its name with a rich, buttery flavor and delicate, pale yellow color. Pods are 7 inches long, slender, and perfectly straight. Does well where nights are cool and benefits from regular picking.

BEAN/BUSH/WAX *(continued)***30 seeds per packet**

Pencil Pod Black Seeded Wax. *50–60 days.* Introduced around 1900, this bean was developed from a cross of Improved Black Wax x Black Eyed Wax. Rust and mosaic resistant, the bushy plants bear a heavy crop of stringless, 6-inch beans with excellent flavor.

BEAN/POLE/DRY**30 seeds per packet**

Dolloff. *110 days.* A beautiful, unusual bean shaped more like a lima bean, flattened, with a light buff background and pale pinkish-burgundy streaks. The 8-foot vines produce lavishly, the beans have outstanding flavor and can be used either in the shell stage or dried. Originally from Hattie Gray of West Burke, Vermont, in 1985. She and her mother got it from Ray Dolloff of Burke Hollow, Vermont, around 1920. Pods are 6 inches long and contain an average of 6 to 7 seeds. A 12-foot row yielded 5 pounds of beans.

Munsee Wampum. A late-maturing, prodigiously high-yielding bean, with up to 6 pods per stem. My seed comes from Will Weaver, noted food historian. It was collected by his grandfather in the 1930s. Some confusion surrounds the spelling of the name, there's a town in central Pennsylvania called Muncy, at the same time "Minsi" is one of three linguistic groups of the Lenape/Delaware Indians. Vines are very tall, leaves are large, pods are slender, containing 6–7 small, squarish slightly flattened seeds with a tan background and dark brown streaking.

True Red Cranberry. *95 days.* Bean collector John Withee saw mention of this variety in a 1700s gardening encyclopedia, and finally found it, after an 11-year search, in Steep Falls, Maine. It may well be a Native American variety. The exact size, shape, and color of a cranberry, this dazzlingly beautiful glossy, garnet-colored heirloom grows on 6 to 7-foot moderately productive vines. Each pod holds 5 seeds. Richly flavored, it makes excellent baked beans and an outrageously delicious (speckled!) hummus.

BEAN/POLE/SNAP**30 seeds per packet**

Berner Landfrauen. A Swiss heirloom with round, purple-streaked pods each containing about 8 seeds. Excellent flavor and tenderness. A relatively late variety. Grow on tripods or a trellis. Seeds are cappuccino-colored with darker brown streaks.

Stangenbohne Ilanz. *58 days.* A Swiss heirloom—"Stangenbohne" means pole bean—obtained through Pro-SpecieRara. This vigorous pole bean puts out 9-foot vines with large leaves and very long pods, some containing as many as 11 pure white seeds, slightly smaller and straighter than kidneys. The pods are tender and flavorful in the snap stage, and the seeds make an excellent dry bean. Grown in the Swiss town of Ilanz since before 1900.

BEET/GARDEN**120 seeds per packet**

Beet and chard seeds are actually clusters of seeds. You will get between 2 and 3 seedlings from each seed, so keep that in mind when sowing.

Feuer Kugel. *65–75 days.* A rare Swiss heirloom whose name means "fire globe", this smooth-skinned beet remains sweet and tender to a large size. It is flavorful raw or cooked and stores exceptionally well.

Golden. *55–60 days.* Also known as Golden Beet and Burpee's Golden, this variety was introduced before 1828. A dual-purpose beet, its leaves are sweet and flavorful, its globe-shaped orange roots are tender and mild even when large, and turn golden yellow during cooking. Ideally suited for salads since they do not bleed. Stores well.

CELERIAC

500 seeds per packet

Celeriac is not at all difficult to grow, but thrives in rich, loose soil with an abundance of organic matter. It requires steady moisture throughout its long growing season. Start sets indoors 12 weeks before the last frost and plant out with ample spacing—8 to 12 inches between plants. Mulch between plants, keep well watered, and be patient!

Brilliant. 110 days. A round, smooth European strain with white flesh and a sweet, nutty flavor. Outstanding both raw and cooked, in salads, soups, stews, or in a mixture of roasted root vegetables. Celeriac is an old European favorite just beginning to be fully appreciated in the U.S. Its unusual flavor adds a new dimension to the palette of our New England selection of winter vegetables. Roots reach 4 inches in diameter if given lots of room.

Monstropolgi. 100 days. Firm, large, round roots with few side shoots and great flavor. This is a rare variety, its outstanding characteristic is that the small roots are concentrated at the base, meaning there is very little waste during trimming. Celeriac stores very well in the root cellar.

CELERY

500 seeds per packet

Homegrown celery is nothing like what you find in the supermarket. The plants are large and full, stems are somewhat thinner than commercial varieties, and the flavor is intense. It is best used as an accent and an aromatic, but is well worth growing.

Gigante Dorato. An Italian variety, the name of which means “golden giant”. Pale yellow-green stems and leaves lend an intense celery flavor to *mirepoix*, that lovely French aromatic base of soups, sauces, and stews that consists of minced onion, carrot, and celery stewed in butter. Perfect for adding to stock.

Red. Sturdy, bushy 18-inch plants, slender stalks with a deep red/green color. The flavor is concentrated and spicy. This is a very cold-hardy variety, with many plants surviving winter with minimal cover. Use in soups, stews, potato salad, or a beet/apple/walnut salad.

CHICORY

150 seeds per packet

Radicchio Castelfranco Libra. 85–95 days. An improved strain of the Italian heirloom Castelfranco, this stunning radicchio has creamy yellow-green leaves splashed with red streaks. Round heads do not need cutting back to produce well. Radicchios have been relatively recently “domesticated”, so there is still a fair amount of variability in the plants. Start sets end of June for fall harvest. Extremely cold hardy. Plants of this variety survived the winter right in the garden with only row cover for protection.

CORN/FLINT

100 seeds per packet

Corn is a wind-pollinated crop and requires about 2–3 miles of isolation to ensure pure seed. Make sure you are sufficiently distant from either neighbors who are growing corn or from fields of GMO corn. If you are growing just for food, one packet of seed will be sufficient, but if you would like to save your own seed you should start with a minimum of 200 plants.

Floriani Red Flint. 100–110 days. This is a gorgeous flint corn, growing to a stately 10–12 feet in height. Kernels are deep maroon in color, each with a pointed tip. The variety is a family heirloom from the Valsugana valley east of Trent in Lombardy. The coarsely ground meal, speckled with red from the seed coat, makes the best polenta you will ever taste.

CORN/POPCORN

100 seeds per packet

Vermont Red Kernel. *102 days.* Very dark burgundy kernels on diminutive ears 4–5 inches long. Kernels are slender and pointed, looking much like what's often called strawberry corn. Pops to a pure white, sturdy-flavored popcorn. Approximately 5 feet in height. There are frequently 2 ears per plant.

CRESS

400 seeds per packet

Shallot Cress Mahontongo. *45 days.* An old Pennsylvania German heirloom with spoon-shaped leaves that grow in a rosette and have a flavor resembling garlic chives. This hardy biennial can provide a welcome and refreshing tonic in the form of spicy early spring greens if plants are allowed to go to seed and self-sow.

Upland Special. *45 days.* A compact, extremely hardy, dark green cress with very spicy flavor similar to arugula. Outstanding in a mix of greens. This variety is best planted in the fall for tender plants in the spring and will also self-sow if allowed to go to seed. A selection of Peters Seed and Research.

CUCUMBER

30 seeds per packet

Athens. *55 days.* About 9 inches long, this uniformly slender slicer has smooth, deep dark green skin, dense, firm, crisp flesh, and a small seed cavity. Very productive over a long season on vines that want support. A fine cucumber both for market and the home garden.

Cornichon de Bourbonne. *50 days.* No slice of pâté is complete without a complement of tiny cornichons. This French heirloom produces prolifically on robust vines. Plump cukes should be picked when no more than 2 inches long, the dark nubs rubbed off during washing. Picked continuously throughout the season, they can easily be processed in small batches. Just make sure you also have fresh tarragon on hand!

Cornichon Vert de Massy. *56–60 days.* This is the classic cornichon cuke beloved in France to accompany pâtés and cold meats or for inclusion in Sauce Gribiche. Ideally pick at no more than 2 inches and process in small batches for enjoyment throughout the year. Seven plants are adequate to supply a family, but they will need support. In Switzerland cornichons are an indispensable accompaniment to raclette.

EGGPLANT

50 seeds per packet

Growing eggplant in our region is famously a challenge. Start sets about 8 weeks before last frost, keeping seed evenly warm at about 70° for best germination. Protect seedlings from any stresses which will compromise future fruiting. Set out only after soil has warmed to 60° and cover with row cover if necessary to keep out nighttime chills until the plants are well established, or for the entire growing season if you wish.

Diamond. *80 days.* A Ukrainian variety brought back to the States in 1993 by Seed Savers Exchange co-founder Kent Whealy. Developed by the Donetskaya Vegetable Experiment Station, it is also known as Almaz. The fruits are glossy, elongated, tapered, dark purple with pale green flesh that is free of bitterness. The 2-foot sturdy, upright plants set 2 by 7-inch fruits, approximately 12 ounces each, in clusters of 4 to 6. Of all the eggplants I've trialed over the years, this is the best performing, with no help from rowcover or black plastic mulch. So if you are inclined to use those aids you should get even better results.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE

150 seeds per packet

Bionda a Cuore Pieno. *60–65 days.* Known here as Blond Full Heart, this is a superb escarole. Plant either early in the spring for salads or steamed greens, or later in the season for fall harvests. Dense heads reach 12 to 14 inches across and hold extremely well in the garden, making it a great candidate for fall CSAs or markets as well as for home gardeners craving greens into the fall. Leaves are slightly crumpled, medium green on the outside and lemony light at the heart. Extremely hardy, thrives either under rowcover into December or in the greenhouse all winter. Turns sweeter after frost. Divine sautéed with pasta or *all'arrabbiata*, with pancetta and hot pepper flakes.

Frisée Très Fine Maraîchère. *60 days.* A 19th century French heirloom endive producing small, compact heads with frizzled leaves, white at the core and fading through golden yellow to green at the outer edges. A beautiful and mildly bitter addition to any salad mix. Although not extremely cold hardy, the heads hold very well in the garden, making for a long harvest season.

LEEK

200 seeds per packet

Jaune du Poitou. A 19th century heirloom from the Poitou region of France. A long, slender, pale yellow-green leek of great tenderness and delicacy of flavor. Not specifically a winter variety, but I have had plants survive until spring without protection.

Scotland. *85–90 days.* A very sturdy heirloom winter leek with fat, pure white, 2 by 7-inch shanks and deep green leaves. Outstanding flavor and exceptional hardiness. Spaced generously, these can achieve remarkable size.

LETTUCE/HEAD

250 seeds per packet

Arctic King. *60 days.* A small, extremely hardy, compact bibb lettuce for early spring or late fall harvest. Light green, crinkled leaves and firm heads. Very similar to North Pole but a bit later. Survived many nights in the teens before finally succumbing to a covering of snow.

Erstling. An old German variety which can be planted in the fall for a head start on the spring. Heads are small and compact, with brilliant red edges on the tender leaves and a hint of light green in the very center. Very hardy. Seed is originally from Switzerland.

Lattich in der Erde. The name means “lettuce in the earth”. This medium-green variety came originally from the genebank in Gatersleben, Germany. Wavy, meaty, slightly seersucker leaves form relatively compact heads. Good heat resistance but also extremely cold-hardy, so this is an excellent choice for season-long growing.

North Pole. *50–55 days.* As the name suggests, an extremely cold-hardy butterhead with compact, light green, slightly crinkled leaves. Best for early spring or late fall. Very similar to Arctic King but a bit earlier. A real beauty.

Reine des Glaces. *62 days.* A gorgeous crisphead lettuce also known as Ice Queen. A small, slow-bolting French variety for summer, with bright green, spiky, deeply cut leaves and a convoluted habit. Holds up well in the heat. Cut heads back and let new leaves grow from the base for leaf lettuce.

Rotkopf. *45 days.* A Swiss butterhead with light green leaves at the base darkening to deep burgundy at the edges. Heads are large and full and the flavor is tender and excellent. The name, appropriately, means “redhead”.

Rouquette du Midi. A small crisp butterhead of French origin—also known as Rouquette de Montpellier—with glossy bronze-red leaves, best sown in late summer for fall salads or in very early spring, since it does not appreciate hot weather.

LETTUCE/LEAF

250 seeds per packet

Arugula. *50 days.* A salad green not so long ago virtually unknown in the U.S. but now wildly and deservedly popular. Cold tolerant in the extreme, with a nutty, peppery, irresistible flavor. Let a number of plants go to seed for a profusion of volunteers.

Cracoviensis. *45–65 days.* Very unusual lettuce from Eastern Europe with long, slender, wavy, lime-green leaves dusted with reddish purple or lavender. A fast-growing variety that will form a large, loose head, then bolt as soon as the weather heats up. Once the plants have reached about a foot in height, the thick, fleshy stems can be peeled and eaten as a vegetable. Hence its alternate name “asparagus lettuce”.

Drunken Woman Fringed Headed. *55 days.* Bright green, crisp leaves terminate in ruffled, almost frizzy edges with a narrow band of burgundy. This is a very showy, semi-heading variety with leaves that look like someone went after them with pinking shears. Slow to bolt and with a refreshing tender, sweet flavor.

Merlot. *45–50 days.* A diminutive, frilly lettuce with some of the darkest maroon leaves around. Only at the very base is there a hint of light green. Loose-leaved in habit, excellent for cut-and-come-again culture or in a mesclun mix, with glossy, mild-flavored leaves and a reluctance to bolt.

Radichetta. *56 days.* Although this variety originally comes from Italy it was recently renamed “Cressonnette du Maroc” in France. A gorgeous, generously proportioned, medium-green oak leaf, succulent in flavor and both heat tolerant and cold hardy.

Rubin. *55 days.* The name of this beautiful, upright, loose, frilly-edged, deep burgundy lettuce means “ruby”. Very cold hardy and the leaf color deepens as temperatures drop. Pale yellow-green at the very center.

Tango. *45 days.* Large heads of very curly, deep green, vitamin-rich leaves. Extremely cold-hardy variety, showy and easy to mistake for an endive, but with a tender, delicate, buttery flavor.

LETTUCE/ROMAINE

250 seeds per packet

Kaiser Selbstschuss. The slightly open form of this romaine suggests a very old variety. Seed came through ProSpecieRara, but originated from the genebank in Gatersleben, Germany. The smooth leaves are light green, upright, and relatively slender. This is an outstanding lettuce for fresh eating or steaming.

Rouge d’Hiver. *60 days.* An exceptionally cold-hardy French heirloom from the 1800s. Upright, with full, broad leaves that turn increasingly deep burgundy as the weather cools. Crisp and buttery flavor. Outstanding for fall harvest, but will also do well in the heat if kept watered.

MELON/MUSKMELON

30 seeds per packet

Eden’s Gem. *70–90 days.* a.k.a. Eden Gem, Rocky Ford Eden Gem. A petite, green-fleshed, netted melon weighing in at about one pound each, developed in 1905 at Rocky Ford, Colorado. Sweet and spicy flavor. Very productive and well-suited to the small garden.

Iroquois. *70–85 days.* Developed at Cornell by a Dr. Munger and introduced in 1944, this variety is particularly suited to growing in the Northeast. The rind is heavily netted and faintly ribbed, the deep orange flesh is fragrant and juicy and won hands-down in a taste test comparing it to other locally-grown melons. Slightly oval fruits measure 7 by 6 inches and weigh up to 5 pounds.

MELON/WINTER MELON

30 seeds per packet

Valencia Winter. *120 days.* A mild, sweet, juicy honeydew with pale green flesh and very dark green, slightly ribbed rind. First listed in American catalogues in the 1830s, but may go back further than that. Keeps extraordinarily well, easily into January, so it offers one response to the perennial localvore question “but what will I do for fresh fruit in winter?”!

ONION/BUNCHING

120 seeds per packet

Japanese Bunching. Scallions, or green onions, generally are slow growers, but this variety is robust and off to a quick and strong start. Seeds can be started indoors and transplanted out after danger of frost. Essentially a perennial, so plant a patch in one corner of the garden where it will be undisturbed and allow the plants to produce seed year after year.

ONION/COMMON/RED

120 seeds per packet

Southport Red Globe. *100–120 days.* A now rare heirloom from 1873, developed along the Mill River in Southport, Connecticut. This is one of the most beautiful of all the red onions I trialed. Large globe-shaped roots average from 7 to 9 ounces, but can reach 15 ounces. Intensely red-purple, glossy skin, firm flesh with deep color throughout, pungent flavor. Exceptional keeping qualities, storing up to 11 months. A long day variety.

ONION/COMMON/YELLOW

120 seeds per packet

Yellow of Parma. *110–120 days.* A rare and hard-to-find Italian storage onion, uniformly round, solid, golden yellow globes average 7 ounces each. A long day variety storing up to 10 months.

PARSLEY

100 seeds per packet

Comune. Seeds of this variety originally came from a street market in northern Italy. The leaves are a very deep green, flat, relatively delicate, pungent, and abundant. Hardy and productive, my seed is from plants that wintered over in the garden under snow cover but otherwise without protection. An excellent selection for the hoop- or greenhouse for parsley all winter.

PARSNIP

300 seeds per packet

Parsnip seeds are slow to germinate. You can speed germination by soaking the seeds overnight before planting. Keep seeds well watered until they emerge. Homegrown seed will remain viable for at least 3 years.

Guernsey. *95–120 days.* My original seed came from Meredith Kennard, director of the Hancock Shaker Village Historic Garden in Hancock, Massachusetts. The variety was introduced into England in 1826 from the Channel island of Guernsey. A very sweet parsnip, fine-fleshed, producing evenly tapered roots up to 14 inches in length, with few side roots and outstanding keeping qualities.

PEA/GARDEN

30 seeds per packet

Spanish Skyscraper. *91 days.* Give these 7-foot vines lots of support, for they will be loaded with light green pods containing sweet peas that ripen and produce for as long as a month if kept picked. This is supposedly a very old variety but has been bred by Canadian Ken Allan for over 20 years to increase productivity.

PEA/POD

30 seeds per packet

Amish Snap. *60–70 days.* An heirloom from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, this delicious snap pea will continue to produce over a 6-week period if kept picked. Vines are 6 feet tall, crisp pods are a delicate green and filled with 4 to 7 peas each.

Arbogast Sugar. *60 days.* Introduced before 1884, and most likely identical with Tall Sugar Pea, offered by David Landreth of Pennsylvania, this snap pea is tender and crisp when young. The vines grow to 6 feet, blossoms are purple, and the wrinkled seeds are speckled brown.

Golden Sweet. *65 days.* Gorgeous bicolor purple flowers give way to lemon yellow, translucent, flat pods on 6 to 8-foot vines. Best enjoyed when young, but the peas can also be used in soups if allowed to mature and dry on the vine. This is the only edible-podded pea with a yellow pod in the SSE collection of over 1,200 pea varieties. Highly productive.

Kefe Beinwil. *60 days.* “Kefe” means snow pea. A Swiss heirloom grown for generations in the village of Beinwil, Aargau. This pea must be planted as early as possible for good results. The vines are 4½ feet high and bear diminutive pods of very delicate flavor from beautiful burgundy and pink blossoms. Moderately productive.

Kiefel Vermeer. *70 days.* A snow pea very similar to Schweizer Riesen, but growing on shorter, 3-foot vines. Pods are also 1 inch wide by 5 inches long, each containing 8 seeds. Purple flowers. Wonderfully tender and flavorful. From the Swiss seed saving organization ProSpecieRara.

Schweizer Riesen. *65 days.* “Swiss Giant”. Huge, 1 by 5-inch, pale green, succulent snow peas that curl as they grow and remain sweet and tender even as they mature. A fabulous variety, very productive over a long period. Vines are 5 feet tall.

Shirk Family. *80 days.* A small-podded snow pea, extremely prolific, growing on 4-foot vines. This pea comes from a Mennonite community in Michigan, where it was handed down in one family for many years. It should be harvested young, but any pods that don’t get picked can be left both for next year’s seed and for use as a soup pea.

PEA/SOUP

30 seeds per packet

Amplissimo Viktoria Ukrainskaya. *90 days.* A potential chickpea substitute for our region, since it makes delicious hummus. The 5-foot vines bear white flowers and an abundance of smooth, creamy-colored round peas in 3-inch pods with 5 to 7 peas each. Very easy to thresh.

Góroh. *90 days.* An old variety from the Kaluzhskaya region of Russia. Very cold hardy, with 5-foot vines bearing smooth, round, beige peas, slightly smaller than Amplissimo. Simply let the pods dry on the vines, pick and thresh.

PEPPER/HOT

30 seeds per packet

Flame Tongue. This well-named variety was developed by seed saver Rod Trotter in Oregon. The tapered, slightly crimped and torqued fruits measure ½ by 1 inch and ripen to a brilliant red. Very hot. Plants grow to about 20 inches and are covered with fruits. Just a pinch of the dried peppers adds welcome heat to an array of dishes.

PEPPER/HOT (*continued*)**30 seeds per packet**

Thai Hot. Small, upright peppers borne on diminutive plants pack great, complex flavor in addition to considerable heat. Use in the green stage or allow them to ripen to a dark red for drying. Simply spread them out on a sheet pan in the sun or in a dry, well-ventillated spot. Remove seeds and ribs to lower heat intensity.

PEPPER/SWEET**30 seeds per packet**

Boldog Hungarian Spice. A $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch by 6-inch long, somewhat blocky but slender paprika pepper with intoxicating aroma and a touch of heat once dried and ground. The plants are robust and about 2 to 3 feet tall, bearing heavily close to the stems. Peppers start dark green, then ripen to a rich reddish-brown. The relatively thin flesh dries easily. Simply cut peppers in half lengthwise, scrape out the seeds, then arrange pepper halves on racks in the sun till dry. Take the racks in at night to prevent peppers from getting damp.

Sheepnose. *75 days.* An Ohio heirloom from the family of Nick Rini. A pimento pepper, with flattened, lobed, cheese-shaped fruits, 3 inches wide, with very thick, meaty walls and sweet flavor. A prolific variety in Vermont, even without black plastic or rowcover. Fruits hold very well on the plant and after picking, staying fresh in the fridge for up to 10 days.

RADISH**110 seeds per packet**

French Breakfast. *20–30 days.* A buttery-tender French heirloom radish from the 1880s, oblong in form, scarlet red at the top and white at the blunt tip. Succession sow all season for continuous harvest.

RHUBARB**50 seeds per packet**

Rhubarb is very easy to start from seed. Wet the seeds thoroughly, then keep them moist for several days until they germinate. Pot up the sprouted ones in individual cells. Transplant to the garden when the starts have at least 4 true leaves. Start as many plants as you have space for, then choose the strongest ones that best represent the typical traits of the variety. To save seed, allow only one variety to bloom in a given year to prevent unwanted crossing.

Early Champagne. This is a pre-1860s English variety, with fanciful, very ruffled leaves and slender, pale green stems the color of gooseberries, originally used for sparkling rhubarb wine. Very productive over a long season, going dormant later than other varieties.

RUTABAGA**250 seeds per packet**

American Purple Top. *80–120 days.* A highly undervalued winter vegetable. Much sweeter and less sharp than turnips, rutabagas are versatile and packed with nutrition. This variety is nearly globe shaped, 4 to 6 inches in diameter or larger, with firm, fine-grained, sweet light-yellow flesh and a small taproot. Rutabagas store exceedingly well in the root cellar.

Fortin's Family. *100–120 days.* An heirloom from Québec, this is a variety of outstandingly sweet and full flavor. It appears to have some insect and disease resistance and is an excellent winter keeper. Direct sow early in the season and space generously to give the plants time to size up well.

Laurentian. *90–120 days.* A Canadian variety that also goes by Laurentian Purple Top, Laurentian Golden, Laurentian Swede or Perfect Model, but is an improved American Purple Top. The creamy-yellow 4 to 6-inch globe roots have outstandingly sweet flavor, deep purplish red tops, no side shoots, and store exceptionally well. Roast or steam, purée, then combine with mashed potatoes. Yum.

SALSIFY

50 seeds per packet

Lüthy. *Biennial/Perennial.* Salsify is closely related to scorzonera, but is a separate species. The root is tapered and resembles a parsnip in shape and color. The flavor is creamy smooth, often compared to that of oysters. This Swiss heirloom has spectacularly beautiful blue/purple flowers which appear in the second year. Peel the roots, drop them into acidulated water, then steam, roast, bake them with a cream sauce, or purée them for a delicate treat. Salsify is extremely hardy and will overwinter without protection.

SCORZONERA

50 seeds per packet

Hoffmann's Schwarze Pfahl. *140 days.* An old vegetable variety much loved in Europe for its buttery, almost oyster-like flavor, scorzonera is even less likely to be known here than its near cousin salsify. But this long, cylindrical, slender root with rough dark brown (almost black, hence its other name Black Salsify) skin and creamy flesh should be more widely grown. It is subtle and luxurious simply steamed in butter, or—to gild the lily—in a cream sauce. This variety came from the Amana colonies of the Midwest, but originated in Germany where it was a popular market variety for its uniform shape and good performance. The roots will easily overwinter in the garden and are still tender and flavorful in the second year. The very young leaves of spring can be added to a salad, and the roots keep well in a root cellar.

SORGHUM

70 seeds per packet

In my quest to find staple crops that we can grow easily in Vermont and that will broaden our diet, I've been experimenting with a variety of different grains. Sorghum comes in four versions: grain, sweet, dual purpose (grain and sweet), and broom. Grain sorghum can be ground into flour and used in baking, or it can be an ingredient in poultry feed. Sweet sorghum can be processed into a molasses-like syrup. Broom corn will allow us to make our own brooms again rather than importing them from a distant location!

Black African. *90 days.* An early-maturing grain variety, plants are about 7 feet tall, heads are slender and bear beautiful, glossy black pointy seeds.

Dwarf Mayo. *120 days.* Technically a broom corn, but the seeds are so beautiful, multi-colored, and easy to thresh that they make a wonderful grain as well. Of all the trialed sorghums, this was the easiest to harvest since the plants are no more than about 6 feet tall. Come time to test seed for ripeness, you don't have to bend lengthy stems to pinch the seed. Long panicles on thick heads are ideal for making your own brooms. Given lots of space this variety will tiller heavily, producing a second tier of heads, about 4 feet in height and later to mature.

Iowa Red. *116 days.* Brick-colored seed on 10-foot plants. A gorgeous and very productive broom corn with red-tipped bristles.

Mennonite. *130 days.* A productive, dual-purpose heirloom variety from Missouri. Stunning, multi-tillered plants reach 10 feet. Brick-colored round grains can be ground into flour and canes can be processed into a sweet, light syrup.

White Broom Corn. *116 days.* This strain originated in Old Sturbridge Village and is the one from which brooms were made in early America. Another multi-purpose sorghum with 9-foot stalks and creamy tan seed that can also be used for poultry feed. The long bristles are outstanding for broom making.

SPINACH

200 seeds per packet

Monnopa. *45 days.* Also known as Low Acid. Moderately savoyed, round leaves form a dense head. This variety is particularly low in oxalic acid—an agent which causes loss of calcium from the blood—but is high in vitamins A, C, and E. Plant in mid-summer for fall harvest. The plants are extremely hardy and will hold very well in the garden without bolting once cold weather sets in. Sweetest flavor of all.

Norfolk. *45–55 days.* An extremely hardy—to minus 30 degrees—Canadian heirloom from the 1880s. Wrinkled leaves. Plant in early spring or mid-summer for fall harvest.

SQUASH/MAXIMA

30 seeds per packet

Red Kuri. *90–95 days.* “Kuri” means chestnut in Japanese, and this might well describe its flavor. A tear-shaped winter squash with brittle, bright orange-red skin and deep orange, dry, nutty, delicious flesh. A beauty that holds its color when steamed. Fruits can reach 5 pounds. Mature, large squashes grown under favorable conditions, well cured, and stored at the proper temperature can keep for up to a year. Roast it with red onions, layer it in lasagne, or use it to make squash-flavored pasta or gnocchi.

SQUASH/MOSCHATA

30 seeds per packet

Musquée de Provence. *90–100 days.* In a Vermont garden the vines of this French heirloom “cheese” squash will grow to about 20 feet and fruits will reach about 17 pounds. The heavily ribbed, flattened, green ripening to ochre squashes have leathery skin with a milky cast. Very few seeds. The flesh is very moist, somewhat sweet and almost cantaloupe-colored. Its unusual flavor makes it a perfect partner for fruit in soups.

SQUASH/PEPO

30 seeds per packet

Black Beauty. *44–64 days.* Glossy, black-green zucchini with creamy-white, fine-flavored, dense, very tender flesh, best harvested at 6 to 8 inches. Productive, open, upright plants will bear till frost. Introduced to U.S. markets in the 1920s. An excellent variety for freezing.

Golden. *60 days.* A gorgeous, brilliant golden zucchini producing abundantly on bush-habit plants. There are very few open-pollinated yellow summer squash, and this one is exceptional in appearance, productivity, and flavor. The fruits are evenly yellow, tender to about 8 inches in length, and have a slight curve at the neck. The plants seem to be quite resistant to powdery mildew. Developed at Rutgers and introduced in 1973.

Lebanese Light Green. *50–55 days.* Ghostly light green in color with faint streaking, a bit wider at the blossom end, these dense and nutty-flavored zucchini will produce copiously until frost if kept picked. Compact plants lend themselves to small gardens. Fabulous grilled. Thin slices can be dried into chips with a surprisingly sweet flavor.

TOMATO/ORANGE-YELLOW

50 seeds per packet

Jaune de Chardonne. *80 days.* Indeterminate. A Swiss landrace, not commercially grown, collected originally from a farmers’ market in Vevey. Lemon yellow and the size and shape of a plum, these juicy, sweet beauties are borne abundantly on heavy vines. In the early stages of ripeness Jaune can be used for drying.

Orange Banana. *79 days.* Indeterminate. Perfectly and uniformly apricot-colored, these elongated 3-ounce plum tomatoes are very productive and adapted to a wide range of uses from drying to sauces to fresh eating. Unusually full and sweet flavor for a “paste” tomato. Smooth-skinned and crack-free.

Orange Queen. *92 days.* Indeterminate. Round, softball-sized, 12 to 15 ounces each, deep golden orange color, late-ripening, with a rich flavor and ability to hold very well even at the ripe stage on or off the plant.

Sweet Orange II. *55 days.* Indeterminate. A round, crack-free, sweet-flavored, deep orange cherry tomato to rival Sungold in every regard. Huge yields on vigorous, disease-resistant vines. This is another introduction by Tim Peters of Peters Seed and Research. A family will need only one plant of this one for a steady supply of bite-size tomatoes until frost.

Zolotoe Serdtse. *65–70 days.* Determinate. Don't ask me how to pronounce this. Translates from Russian as "heart of gold". Oxheart-shaped, smooth, crack-free, plump 6-ounce fruits are uniformly clementine orange, have a great zingy sweet/tart flavor and a little point at the bottom. Ripens early on compact plants. From a seed saver in Belarus.

TOMATO/PINK-PURPLE

50 seeds per packet

Eva Purple Ball. *65 days.* Indeterminate. Really more pink than purple. A late 1800s heirloom from the Black Forest region of Germany. Perfectly smooth, blemish-free 5-ounce fruits have a luscious, sweet, juicy flavor.

Gezahnte Tomate Bühler-Keel. *80 days.* Indeterminate. Its name means "toothed tomato", but I'd like to call it Concertina. Very deeply pleated so that slices are almost star-shaped. Pinkish in color, with a very thin skin and sweet mild flavor. Fruits are irregular in size and shape and are borne heavily on vigorous vines. Could be an Italian variety from the region near Naples.

Rose de Berne. *80 days.* Indeterminate. One of the best. An heirloom from Switzerland of outstanding quality. Round, somewhat flattened, very smooth, blemish- and crack-free, extremely productive, 6-ounce, pink, thin-skinned tomatoes of superior sweet and juicy flavor.

Togo Trefle. *70 days.* Indeterminate. A rare heirloom from Togo, West Africa. Small, flattened, ribbed, ½-ounce fruits. A heavy producer with excellent rich sweet/tart taste and some variation in size, shape, and color. Extremely hardy and very tolerant of drought and heat.

TOMATO/RED

50 seeds per packet

Amish Paste. *80 days.* Indeterminate. An heirloom from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Acorn- or heart-shaped with deep red color and intense tomatoey flavor. Meaty with few seeds, thick flesh, and 8 to 12-ounce fruits. Excellent for fresh eating or canning. A succulent choice — along with homegrown celery! — for the Italian bread and tomato salad *panzanella*.

Baselbieter Röteli. *70 days.* Indeterminate. From the Basel region of Switzerland. A small, blocky, 2-ounce plum tomato borne abundantly in large clusters. Very good taste, even in a year when the weather made it difficult to judge tomato flavor. Excellent for fresh eating, drying, or canning. Juicier and smaller than Royal Chico.

Burbank. *70 days.* Determinate. Medium-size, 3-ounce fruits, round, smooth, uniform, with good flavor and good drought resistance. Developed by Luther Burbank around 1915, with the highest total free amino acids of all tomatoes tested.

Ganti. *65 days.* Semi-determinate. A Hungarian heirloom. An excellent tomato with tart, full-bodied flavor. Bright red, round, uniform 4 to 5-ounce fruits. One of my favorites.

Kathleen's Wild Sweet Cherry. *50 days.* Indeterminate. This tiny, intensely tart/sweet ¾-inch cherry tomato was given to me by a friend who gardens in a community garden in Brooklyn. The rangy vines are loaded with clusters of 7 fruits that show no signs of cracking even after torrential rains. Ripens over a long period for a continual harvest, and delivers more flavor than I've ever encountered in a cherry tomato. Extraordinarily resistant to late blight.

TOMATO/RED *(continued)***50 seeds per packet**

Kron-Prince. *70–75 days.* Indeterminate. The variety originated in India, but my seed came from a seed saver in Belarus. Very unusual tomato, borne in huge clusters of up to 20 3-ounce fruits, this amazingly productive, charming multi-purpose tomato is uniform in size, firm-fleshed, completely crack-free, heart-shaped with a pointed end. Juicy enough for fresh eating, but excellent for drying or a richly flavored sauce.

Küssnachter. *75 days.* Indeterminate. An heirloom from the town of Küssnacht on the Lake of Lucerne in central Switzerland. Somewhat squat, irregularly lobed fruits weigh 3 to 8 ounces, are intensely flavorful and a deep, even red.

Muchamiel. *75 days.* A meaty tomato originally from Alicante on the Mediterranean coast of southern Spain, where it is cultivated as a winter crop, giving it some tolerance to cool conditions. The flattened, heavily ribbed, 7 to 11-ounce fruits have a very fine flavor. From ProSpecieRara.

Old Fashioned Garden Peach. *80 days.* Semi-determinate. A so-called keeping tomato, which generally refers to a late-maturing, relatively thick-skinned, firm-fleshed tomato that holds well after picking. This is a globe-shaped, smooth-skinned, crack-free, 4-ounce tomato with better flavor than other keepers.

Pomodorini di Sardegna. *70 days.* Indeterminate. A tiny, pear-shaped plum from Sardinia, growing in elongated clusters of up to 16 fruits. Rangy vines produce copious numbers of bright red, glossy, ½-ounce fruits over a long season. Like other cherries, it showed considerable resistance to late blight. Dried, these beauties make bite-size “chips”.

Royal Chico. *85 days.* Determinate. Compact and vigorous vines bear heavy yields of large plum tomatoes with firm, bright red, meaty flesh. Ideal for drying and one of the best for canning. This is a late-ripening tomato and it is possible, if frost threatens, to pull up entire plants, hang them upside down in the cellar, and allow the remaining tomatoes to ripen over time.

South American Banana. *90 days.* Indeterminate. This very large, 5 to 6-inch, elongated tomato resembles San Marzano, but is not quite as blocky. A stellar canning tomato, with outstanding flavor, thin skin, few seeds, and good yield if you can wait for it to ripen!

Thessaloniki. *80 days.* Indeterminate. Glecklers Seedsmen of Ohio introduced this Greek variety to the U.S. in the 1950s. Firm, uniform, crack-free 6-ounce fruits with superior flavor. Perfectly globe-shaped, this productive mid-season tomato would make an excellent choice for markets.

TOMATO/OTHER COLORS**50 seeds per packet**

Indian. *80 days.* Indeterminate. What some might call a “black” or “bronze” tomato, this one is actually two-tone: with a purple underside and green shoulders when ripe. The interior is deep bronze. A gorgeous tomato with a fine, tangy flavor, 8 to 10-ounce fruits, and a moderate yield.

Peppermint. *80 days.* Indeterminate. A bicolor yellow tomato with a stunning aurora borealis-like red flare on the bottom which bleeds into the interior. Fruits are up to 17 ounces. Praised for its meaty, sweet flesh.

White Delight. *80 days.* Indeterminate. Ivory white, 6 to 7-ounce fruits, tending toward lemon yellow on the shoulders. This is a somewhat flattened, faintly lobed variety with outstanding flavor and some variation in size and shape. My first seed came from Ruth Joly of Windsor Road Nursery in Claremont, New Hampshire, who has been growing it for many years. It was originally a commercial variety, perhaps sold under this name, but so far I have been unable to find any further historical information.

Yellow Out Red In. *99 days.* Semi-determinate. Another keeping tomato, this one providing fresh tomatoes into January if well stored. Uniform in size, crack-free, very productive late-ripening tomato with pale yellow skin and a peachy-pink interior. Pick just when beginning to turn in color, lay in flats, tuck into the root cellar, and allow to ripen over time.

WATERMELON

25 seeds per packet

Golden Midget. *80 days.* Developed by famed New Hampshire plant breeder Elwyn Meader, and introduced in 1959, this diminutive, very early, perfectly round watermelon ripens to a golden yellow. The pink/red flesh is sweet and flavorful. Average weight is about 1½ pounds. An excellent choice where space is limited.

Orangeglo. *85–100 days.* Large, oblong fruits with light-green rind and dark, jagged markings produced on sturdy, wilt-resistant vines. The bright orange flesh is crisp, full of flavor and almost addictively sweet. In my garden, fruits reached about 17 pounds, but they can grow to 25. Makes a fabulous smoothie with homemade yogurt and fresh raspberries.

MISCELLANEOUS

Cilantro Standby. *45 days.* This variety was bred by Tim Peters of Peters Seed and Research, a small seed company with over 20 years of careful breeding and preservation experience. Standby was developed for fall sowing and is extremely cold hardy and slow to bolt. The seeds of cilantro are, of course, coriander and, when freshly ground, are particularly aromatic. So this crop is a twofer. **65 seeds per packet.**

Fennel selvatico. *Tender perennial.* This is a non-bulbing fennel grown for its highly aromatic seed. Start indoors at the end of March, plant out in early May. Allow plenty of room since the plants reach impressive dimensions. The seeds will mature over a long season, so be prepared to harvest repeatedly. This is the classic fennel used to season Italian sausage. In warmer climates the plants are perennial. Each seed produces two seedlings. **100 seeds per packet.**

Nigella. Love in a Mist. The seed is used in Lebanese baking, and is also called “black cumin”. The flowers look like tiny versions of passion fruit flowers, ranging in color from very pale to deep blue on the same plant. The delicately perfumed seed is pure black and looks a little like onion seed. Allow the pods to dry on the plant, but be careful—they will readily spill their seed. **100 seeds per packet.**

Red Orach. *45 days.* a.k.a. Mountain Spinach, orach is a relative of lamb’s quarters that has been in cultivation for over 1000 years. Heavily branched plants can reach 6 feet. The deep ruby leaves are a dusty green on the underside and are delicious added to salads when young or steamed when older. Red orach contains three times the vitamin C of spinach. Plant closely in rows, then eat the thinnings. A great warm-weather spinach substitute. Allow a few plants to bolt and you will have volunteers the following season. **50 seeds per packet.**

BARLEY/HULLESS

60 seeds per packet

Barley is an ancient food that now still ranks fourth in the world among cereal crops in terms of quantity grown and area devoted to cultivation. Its nutritional content and benefits are hard to overstate. It is easy to grow, easy to thresh, delicious and satisfying in its whole form. Plant as early in the season as possible—mid-April in our area—in moderately fertile soil, spacing seeds about 3 inches apart at a depth of 1 to 2 inches. Thresh by rubbing between your gloved hands, then winnow on a breezy day. Grains can be ground into flour for a dark, dense bread, cracked for a meaty hot breakfast cereal, or cooked whole for adding to soups or making into grain salads. Soak the grains several hours, then cook in ample water till tender.

Arabian Blue. *104 days.* An awned, 6-row variety with deep purple grains and an average of 48 grains per head. Very easily threshed.

Burbank. *90 days.* Golden brown grains arranged in 6 rows on awned heads. Relatively large grains, plant height is 41 inches. A very productive variety that is easy to thresh.

Faust. *80–100 days.* Awnless heads with an average of 45 grains each growing in 6 rows. The grains are a dark toasty gray-brown. Very easily threshed.

Naked. *85 days.* Blond grains on 2-row awned heads. Very productive and very easy to thresh.

RYE

100 seeds per packet

Perennial Rye Mountaineer. Perennial grains offer many advantages. Because their roots extend deeper than those of annuals, they stabilize the soil, reduce erosion, reduce the need for fertilizer application, bring nutrients up to the surface, and, of course, provide a harvest over several years without requiring re-planting. Bred by Tim Peters, this rye variety produces slender, shatter-resistant heads, with delicate stalks almost 6 feet tall. Easily threshed. Good for poor soils. Plant in the fall for seed the following spring. Unlike most other grains, rye varieties will cross-pollinate, so for pure seed be sure to isolate from annual rye.

WINTER WHEAT

100 seeds per packet

Winter wheats tend to be more productive than spring wheats. Because they are planted in the fall, they save time in the spring when so much needs to be done in the garden. Ripening in mid-summer allows them to escape some of the disease pressures that afflict later-ripening spring wheats. Plus, their early emergence and dense foliage help keep weeds down. Superb flavor and baking qualities add to their desirable features. Plant winter wheats before September 15th, in moderately fertile, well-worked soil. Ideally, seeds should be sown about 8 to 12 inches apart in all directions, at a depth of about 1 to 2 inches. Closer spacing will mean less tillering and a slightly lower yield

Maris Wigeon. Developed in 1964 by the Plant Breeding Institute in Cambridge, England, this semi-hard winter wheat has excellent bread-baking qualities. Good yield on awnless heads, strong straw with little tendency to lodge.

Sirvinta. A hard winter variety from Lithuania, introduced in 1989. I obtained my original seed from seed saver extraordinaire Will Bonsall. A beautiful, awnless, very productive variety with fat, easy-to-thresh golden heads on golden stems growing to 5 feet. The only winter wheat I've grown that does not lodge. Excellent cold tolerance.

Ukrainka. This hard winter wheat was developed in 1924 at the Mironovka Experimental Selection Station—now called the Mironovka Institute of Wheat Selection and Seed Production—110 km south of Kiev. Plants are 51 inches tall, heavily tillered, very productive. Plump grains are dark tan and ripen in mid-July. Excellent milling and bread-making qualities.

Vermont Read 1898. A soft white winter wheat, originally released in 1895 by G. A. Read of Charlotte, Vermont. A hybrid of Canadian heritage varieties Bearded Fife x Early Arcadian with plump, blond grains. Very productive, multi-tillered 49-inch plants with an unusually-shaped seed head that is slightly denser at the tip. Ripening in mid-July.

