

He staggers the plantings by several weeks to ensure a longer harvest and an ongoing supply of tomatoes. He covers the seedlings with gallon plastic milk cartons he has cut off at the bottoms, or uses a floating row cover, to act as a mini-greenhouse until the plants are into warmer weather. By getting healthy plants in the ground early, Gary is harvesting tomatoes from late June through November.

"Since space is a primary consideration for me, in about half of the pots I plant double seedlings. Then when I put them into the ground, I extra-nourish the soil and foliar feed them by spraying the leaves with a natural fertilizer through the season and get more tomatoes for the space. Mostly, I get away with double plants per hole because of the way I tie the plants," he says.

As the plants grow, Gary prunes the suckers and ties the main and secondary stems vertically (which requires overhead support) with a wired string. The plants then grow in a column about 2½ feet in diameter and up to about 9 feet tall. "By training the tomatoes similar to bonsai plants I'm able to get more plants per square foot of land than most people I know," he says. "I'm also able to get maximum exposure to sunlight. The method is labor-intensive, but it's worth the trouble."

Seed Sources

BRANDYWINE: Pink tomato. Amish heirloom dating back to 1885 when seed-

saving was done by people who realized that the greatest thing they could pass on to the next generation was some of the treasured food plants that had sustained life. One such person was Ben Quinsbury, who lived in Vermont and maintained hundreds of varieties of tomatoes from 1910-1960s. He died at the age of 95, passing on his legacy to the Seed-Savers

red fruit is deeply ridged and heavily lobed. Costoluto is meaty, full-flavored and delicious eaten fresh or used in sauce. Shepherd's Garden Seeds, 30 Irene St., Torrington, CT 06790, (408) 355-6910.

CARMELLO: Popular in European markets, Carmello bears large crops of heavy, juicy tomatoes with exquisite flavor. Delicious from the vine, in salads, sauteed or to add to any dish. Shepherd's Garden Seeds, 30 Irene St., Torrington, CT 06790, (408) 335-6910.

SWEET 100 PLUS: Improved strain of Sweet 100 cherry tomato that is more crack-resistant than the original variety. Developed for improved flavor with a better sweetness that is nicely balanced. This variety is known for bearing fruit all summer. Shepherd's Garden Seeds, 30 Irene St., Torrington, CT 06790, (408) 335-6910.

LEMON BOY: The first lemon-yellow (not golden) tomato variety. Big, 7-ounce fruits are much tastier than most yellow tomatoes. Gurney's Seed & Nursery Co.,

110 Capitol St., Yanicton, SD 57079, (605) 665-1930.

RADIATOR CHARLIE'S MORTGAGE LIFTER: Large, slightly flattened, pink-red tomatoes. Meaty and flavorful, with few seeds and fruit that averages about 2½ pounds. Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, P.O. Box 170 Emeryville, VA 22936, (804) 973-4703.

Exchange, including Brandywine, which was his favorite. Brandywine, which can grow to 1 to 2 pounds, has a light, creamy flesh and exceptionally rich, succulent flavor. Seeds of Change, P.O. Box 15700, Santa Fe, NM 87506-5700, (585) 438-7052.

COSTOLUTO: An Italian heirloom multipurpose tomato that has been enjoyed for many generations. The large, deep-



©1985 Batista Moon Studio