



The tomato festival in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, has the feel of a county fair, left, and is ruled by a court of tomato queens, above.

Scholarship and the Little Miss and Little Mr. Pittston Tomato Festival.

In 2002, things really heated up at the Pittston Tomato Festival with the debut of “Il Pomodoro Tomato Fights,” a sanctioned food fight in the spirit of the well-known “La Tomatina” festival held annually in Buñol, Spain.

As with the Carmel TomatoFest, proceeds from the Pittston Tomato Festival benefit local charities. Last year, through the “Il Pomodoro Tomato Fights” alone, Nocito says more than \$4,000 was raised for local soup kitchens. “If we didn’t have the festival, a lot of civic organizations would not receive funds,” she said. “What really drives me is giving back to the community through donations.”

When it comes to tomato flavor, Pittston—located in an area that has rich acidic soil and a perfect tomato-growing climate—claims its tomatoes are better than all the rest. “(Other towns) can claim the birthplace, they can claim quantity, they can claim whatever, but when it comes to quality our tomatoes are the best,” says Nocito. “We will challenge any group to a taste test.”

One state west, in Reynoldsburg, Ohio (population: 32,000)—designated “The Birthplace of the Tomato”—townspeople are preparing for the 39th annual **Reynoldsburg Tomato Festival** (September 8 to 12), which honors former town resident Alexander W. Livingston (1821–1898) for his successful



If you can't get to a tomato festival this summer, celebrate the harvest in your backyard.

## Resources

**The Great American Tomato Book** by Robert Hendrickson. Reprinted by Stein and Day, New York, New York, 1984.

**The Great Tomato Book** by Gary Ibsen, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, California, 1999.

**Tantalizing Tomatoes: Smart Tips and Tasty Picks for Gardeners Everywhere** edited by Karan Davis Cutler. Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Inc., Brooklyn, New York, 1997.

**The Tomato Festival Cookbook** by Lawrence Davis-Hollander. Storey Publishing, North Adams, Massachusetts, 2004.

**The Tomato in America: Early History, Culture, and Cookery** by Andrew F. Smith. Reprinted by University of Illinois Press, Champaign, Illinois, 2001.

## Sources for Heirloom Tomatoes

**The Cook's Garden**, Londonderry, VT. (800) 457-9703. [www.cooks-garden.com](http://www.cooks-garden.com). Catalog free.

**The Natural Gardening Company**, Petaluma, CA. (707) 766-9303. [www.naturalgardening.com](http://www.naturalgardening.com). Catalog free.

**Seed Savers Exchange**, Decorah, IA. (319) 382-5990. [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org). Catalog free.

**Southern Exposure Seed Exchange**, Mineral, VA. (804) 973-4703. [www.southernexposure.com](http://www.southernexposure.com). Catalog \$2.

**Tomato Growers Supply Company**, Fort Myers, FL. (888) 478-7333. [www.tomatogrowers.com](http://www.tomatogrowers.com). Catalog free.