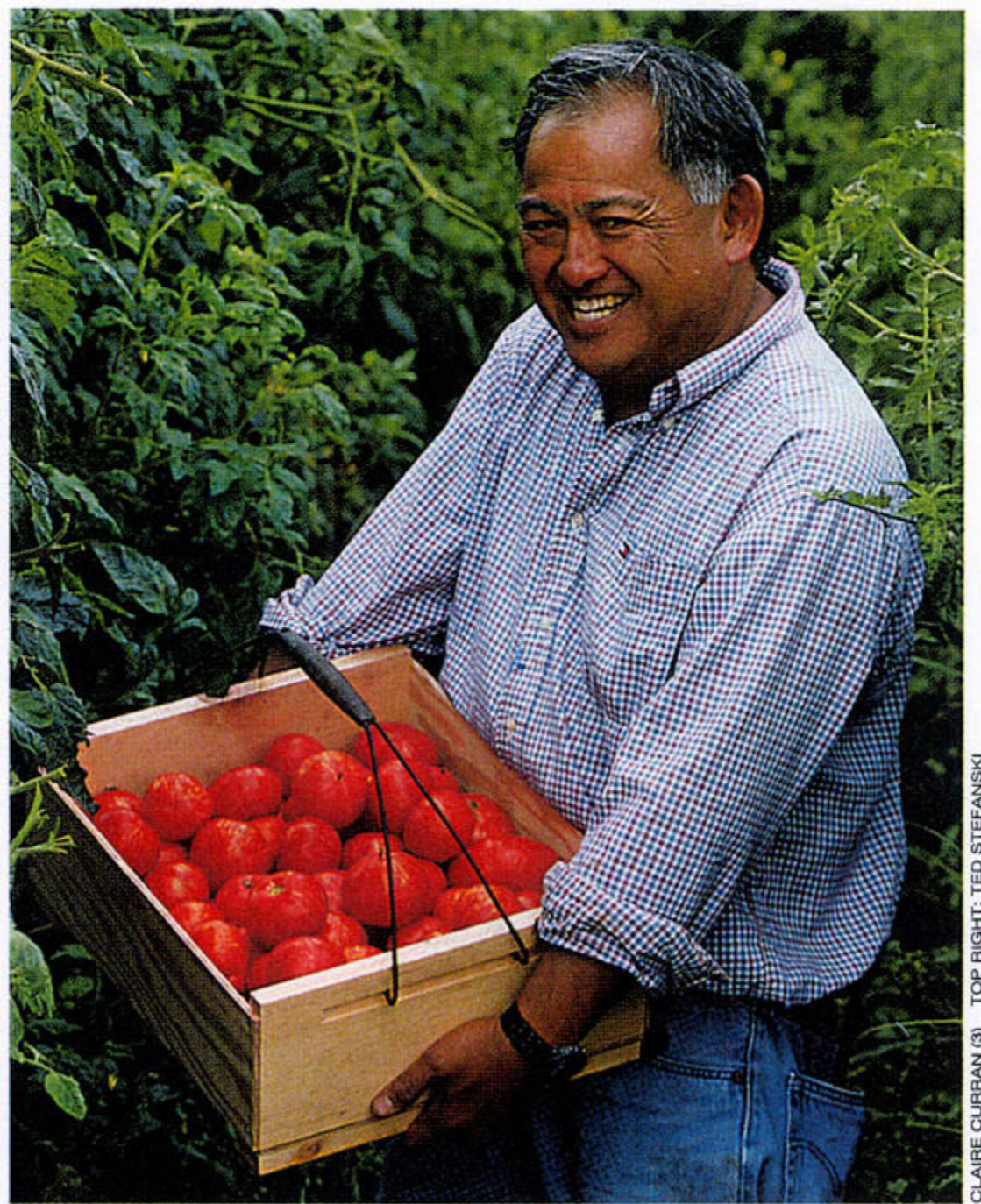


the great tomato taste-off



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Ripe harvest of gold-striped tomatoes accented with chives. At the September Carmel TomatoFest in Carmel Valley, California, visitors sample chunks of ripe tomatoes in many colors. San Diego grower Tom Chino holds a lug of his prized crops. Once green gel disappears from around tomato seeds (as on top fruit), flavor diminishes.

CLAIRE CURRAN (3) TOP RIGHT: TED STEFANSKI