

For immediate release
Gary Ibsen

Announcing "Top 10" Heirloom Tomatoes for 2018

Big, bold-flavored beefsteak tomatoes still favored, while "black" tomatoes, short-season tomatoes, a diversity of cherry tomatoes, heart-shaped tomatoes, and other colors, including "blue" tomatoes, continue to grow in popularity.

Little River, Calif. – November 2, 2017 - Gary Ibsen, founder of TomatoFest® Heirloom Tomato Seeds, author of [The Great Tomato Book](#), and grower of more than 650 varieties of certified organic, heirloom tomatoes, announces the "Top 10" favorite heirloom tomatoes for 2018:

[Black Cherry \(purple/black\)](#)

[Brandywine, Sudduth Strain \(pink beefsteak\)](#)

[Chocolate Stripes \(red/green striped\)](#)

[Blondkopfchen \(yellow cherry\)](#)

[Black Krim \(purple/black beefsteak\)](#)

[Brandywine, OTV \(red beefsteak\)](#)

[Amana Orange \(orange beefsteak\)](#)

[Azoychka \(yellow/orange beefsteak\)](#)

[Cherokee Chocolate \(mahogany beefsteak\)](#)

[Sunset's Red Horizon \(red beefsteak\)](#)

The "Top 10" heirloom tomatoes were selected from the top 10 most popular tomato varieties in 2017 from a TomatoFest customer base of 62,000 home gardeners and tomato farmers.

"Our survey demonstrated again that consumers still want the maximum of those "old fashioned" robust flavors in choosing what tomato varieties to grow in their home garden. The same with farmers growing for produce markets and restaurants where taste is the priority," says Ibsen. "Tomatoes that are considered to be among the "best tasting" varieties, whether that means big, bold, complex flavors with lots of acid, or those varieties perceived to be sweeter, with well-balanced flavors are the priority considerations for popularity of heirloom tomatoes in America."

The most popular tomato varieties continue to be the tomato varieties that offer that big burst of old-fashioned, complex, rich tomato flavors that provide a generous amount of acids to balance the sugars resulting in a tang of tartness. The "heirloom tomato classics," the old-time, favorite, red, pink and "black" beefsteak tomatoes, still provide the foundation of loyalty among tomato growers. Tomatoes with a high level of sweetness, like some of the favored yellow, orange and striped tomatoes also reign high in rankings.

This is the fourth year that TomatoFest surveyed our customers for their "Top 10" favorite tomatoes.

Other findings in the TomatoFest survey:

- In 2017 there was, again, a big increase in first-time tomato gardeners. There are more people wanting to grow foods at home in rural AND urban areas. "The upswing in

folks becoming new tomato gardeners or choosing to become small commercial farmers of heirloom tomatoes for retailing at farmers markets and distributing to produce retailers has been noticeable the past 8 years," says Ibsen.

- 2017 saw a big surge in the popularity of the "black" or "blue" tomatoes, especially the Indigo™ series of the blackest tomatoes. Even though some of these "blue" tomatoes may not carry the delicious depth and complexity in flavors typical of the popular "blacks," they have aroused interest with the home gardener and retailer. Their popularity seems to be based more upon the range of flavors offered and their blacker color.
- Many of the new tomato gardeners are patio or container gardeners who either have no land to garden on, or who don't wish the added labor required of tilling the earth for their garden. In 2017 there was, again, an increase in seed sales for determinate (shorter tomato plants) and dwarf tomato varieties. Some of this increase in seed sales was from used-to-be-land-gardeners who having retired or downsized there living to condominiums or retirement communities, now only have patios available to continue their gardening in containers. Health conscious 'millenniums' who do not own land for gardening appear to be taking up tomato gardening on roof-tops and patios in containers.
- In 2017, there was a continued rise in popularity of cherry tomatoes in all colors. Ibsen says, "We saw more customers ordering several kinds of cherry tomatoes along with their selection of larger tomatoes. In past years, many of the same customers were ordering only 1 or 2 varieties of cherry tomatoes but they seem to have been seduced into selecting more diversified cherry varieties by the range of color and taste experiences offered and their suitability to containers. There is also a modest growth beyond last year for the currant-sized tomatoes by chefs and home gardeners alike.
- 2017 saw a surge in folks ordering 'short season' tomato varieties from cooler regions not typically considered tomato growing regions; cooler coastal regions, cooler northern climates (i.e., Maine, Michigan, even Alaska), and for higher altitude gardens. It appears that more people have come to understand that with the diversity of tomato varieties suitable to more adverse climates they too can enjoy the rewards of home grown tomatoes.
- As the popularity has grown for different colored tomatoes among consumers there has been a proportionate increase for a diverse mix of colors among commercial tomato growers for the marketplace.
- Photos and descriptions of all the above listed tomato varieties can be found at TomatoFest.com

About TomatoFest® Heirloom Tomato Seeds

Gary Ibsen, author of *The Great Tomato Book*, founded TomatoFest Heirloom Tomato Seeds in 1991 and revitalized the appreciation and desire for heirloom tomatoes. Ibsen's belief in sustainable, organic farming, seed saving and sharing seeds and the stories of their cultural histories, inspired him to grow heirloom tomato varieties for more than 30 years. Gary and his partner, Dagma Lacey, grow more than 650 varieties of certified organic, heirloom tomatoes from seeds originally sourced from family farms around the world. Their personal, hands-on tomato production and seed harvest techniques ensure the highest quality seeds and help ensure that these precious heirloom tomato varieties will be sustained for years to come. Through their TomatoFest Seed Donation Program, Gary and Dagma have donated heirloom tomato seeds to more than 380 non-profit, urban garden projects, school gardens, community outreach gardens around the U.S., India, Africa, Europe, and China. For additional information, visit: www.tomatofest.com/tomato-seed-donations.html