



Many ethnic groups preserve seed as part of their heritage. According to Karin, one of the best ethnic groups at preserving seed heritage are the Italians, who save seeds from tomatoes known to make the best sauces and pastes.

Karin Buchan Shares Fascination With Heirloom Gardening

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
BLAIRSVILLE (Indiana Co.)
— Heirloom vegetables and fruits are attracting new interest among gardeners.

"The taste, flavor, and diversity are wonderful," said Karin Buchan of Blairsville. "You can't purchase such a wonderful array of taste, color, and variety in a grocery store."

To be considered an heirloom plant, the variety must have been introduced at least 50 years earlier. Many heirloom varieties have been brought to America by immigrants. Women often stitched seeds in the hems of their garments or hid them in their undergarments.

Karin became a vocal fan of heirloom gardening about five

years ago. "After I saw the size of the plant and realized what I had paid for it, I thought I must have a hole in my head," she joked. But that first taste convinced her that heirloom vegetables were definitely worth pursuing.

After that, she kept finding more and more varieties that she wanted to try. The crop was so prolific that the family couldn't use them all so she decided to try and sell some. Things took off from there.

Karin has a greenhouse with more than 100 varieties of tomatoes and 50 varieties of peppers.

People like the heirloom varieties, but they don't want to bother growing them from seeds. Karin fills this gap by growing the plants and selling the starters.

"The neat thing about my greenhouse is that customers can buy

only one plant rather than a six-pack like many greenhouses insist," Karin said.

In addition, she has many varieties of flowers and other vegetables—all grown with organic methods.

Some may ask if heirloom vegetables taste so great, why aren't the seeds and plants readily available?

"They are not as disease resistant as many newer varieties," Karin said. But she hastens to add that they can be grown without using any pesticides.

"The secret is in using crop rotation and soil testing in the fall. Some plants grow better in certain zones than in others," she said.

Karin sells plants for 35 cents each compared to \$2-\$3 charged by most gardening centers for heirloom plants.

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HOMESTEAD



Antique Collectors Keep Farm History Alive

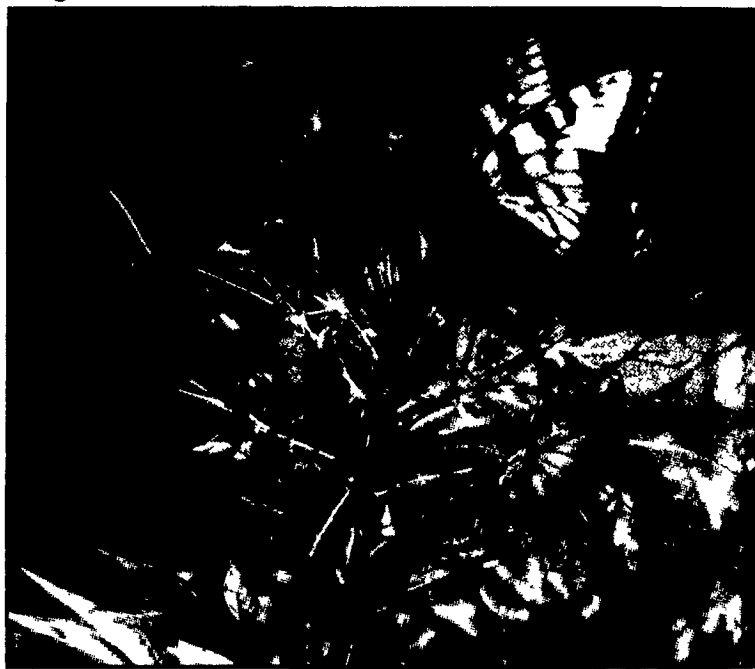
GAIL STROCK
Mifflin Co. Correspondent

SHIRLEYSBURG (Huntingdon County)—Jim McMath of Huntingdon County stands in the wide archway between the kitchen and addition of his 1770s-era stone farmhouse. No matter which way he looks back the hallways or into the kitchen or addition he sees antiques.

What began as a hobby more than 30 years ago has slowly turned the McMath home into a museum in its own right. Jim and his wife Barb have collected more than 400 antique farm toys, 100 plus milk bottles, and many antique tools and household gadgets. They've restored 10 tractors plus an assortment of farm implements. Jim and Barb have collected antiques throughout Pennsylvania, but their most cherished ones are heirlooms they've discovered



"The taste, flavor, and diversity are wonderful," said Karin Buchan of heirloom vegetables. She has a greenhouse with more than 100 varieties of tomatoes, 50 varieties of peppers, and other fruits and vegetables—all grown with organic methods.



Not all seeds saved are to produce food. Many beautiful flowers are grown from seeds passed down through families. To be considered an heirloom plant, the variety must have been introduced at least 50 years earlier.



Jim McMath shows how his antique ginseng digger works. The nursing rocker belonged to Jim's grandmother—McMath and is over 150 years old.

practically in their own backyard.

"That's called a hanging kerosene reflection lamp," Jim says pointing to a lantern suspended from a rafter. "It came from my great-grandparents, and it hung in my aunt's kitchen. My great-great-uncle carried this pistol holder in the Civil War."

From shelves that frame a great stone fireplace, Jim picks up a rare porcelain-lined iron bucket made in 1874 or 1875. "I found this in Mother's attic. It had bricks of ore inside. I'm guessing it is a vegetable steamer."

Two of the family's most prized antiques are a fork and a flail, hand carved from oak by Jim's great-uncle. In the front parlor sits a complete case of Workman soda bottles purchased from Barb's aunt. Her aunt's father worked at the bot-

ting plant in Mount Union. The case is designed to store the bottles upside down. Their Hossier cabinet with original jars and spice wheels was built in 1917 and purchased in Shirleysburg at the former Rockview Academy. But Jim and Barb's interest in antiques goes beyond family heirlooms.

"I like to buy local things, of families I knew, to have pieces of their lives," Jim reflects. Many of the pencils in his extensive bullet pencil collection are from what were once local businesses G. W. Crissman & Sons, a John Deere dealer in Milroy and Belleville; Ehrenzeller Lime, McVeytown; Meadows Country Scrapple, Holidaysburg; M. C. Packing Company, Reedsville; Atlantic Breeders; Morton Salt (When It Rains It Pours!); and several 1950s pencils with Mr. Peanut in a bubble of water. He

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