

Karin Buchan

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Lifter tomato. Legend has it that a farmer was going to lose his farm. He received this seed, and grew and sold such a tremendous amount of large, tasty tomatoes that he saved his farm.

Not all seeds saved are to produce food. Many beautiful flowers are grown from seeds passed down through families.

"Many heirloom roses are being rediscovered in cemeteries and along roadsides, just waiting for someone to dig them up and give them some tender loving care," Karin said.

Some of the heirloom vegetables, herbs, and flowers that Karin encourages people to grow in their gardens, and are available at her farm and at other greenhouses that specialize in heirloom seeds, include the following:

- **Lemon Cucumber** was first introduced in the early 1890s as a novelty but has been reintroduced by many organic gardeners because the variety is fungus and rust resistant. It is productive throughout the season and is fairly drought resistant. It is best used fresh.

- **Purple Podded Pole Beans** are a French heirloom dated from 1775. The beans are extremely productive and attractive with lovely lavender-purple flowers. The vines can reach seven feet in height and require support. A bean teepee works nicely. Unfortunately, the beans do not retain their color when cooked.

- **"Vermont Cranberry Bean."** This cultivar was known before 1670. It is one of the oldest cultivated beans in America. It adds color and is easy to grow, but you need a larger area for any type of storing yield. Storage requires drying.

- **"Five Color" Silver Beet** or **"Neon Lights" Swiss Chard.** This is a beautiful vegetable and adds a lot of color to the garden. Originally offered by the Thompson & Morgan Seed House of England, it dropped out of commercial production and was almost lost. It is being offered for the 1998 season by Johnny's Seeds and Shumway's. It can survive the cold and

adds tremendous color to any garden.

- **"Golden" and "Detroit Red"** Beets are good additions to gardens in this area. The Golden Beet dates before 1828 and is from Europe. It does have a lower germination rate so seed heavily and thin. It can be canned and used in salads. Detroit Red dates from 1828 and is an all around variety.

- **Nasturtiums** were very much part of kitchen gardens in the 1500s — They are edible and the plant and flowers are high in vitamin C. They can be used in vinegars or in salads. The plants lend themselves very well to climbing and color in a garden. The flowers and leaves are great in salads. When planted with squash they will help keep away the squash bugs.

- **The marigold**, which started out as the Calendula, or Pot Marigold, were the golden flowers painted in association with the Virgin Mary. Thus the name, Mary's Gold or now marigold. The flowers lend color to salads. Plant around root crops to discourage nematodes.

- **"Blue Solaise" Leeks** should be part of everyone's garden in this area especially. Cold tolerant and no pests to speak of both these gems. They are interplanting companionable — they keep bugs away from carrots and potatoes. They take up very little garden space.

- **"Clemson Spineless" Okra** was brought from Africa with the slave trade and is related to the Malva family which includes hollyhocks and hibiscus. Okra lends height and the flowers are a beautiful addition to any garden. "Red Velvet" Okra is also a worthy addition. Okra needs full sun and hot dry weather to produce, but is well worth the effort.

- **"All Blue" Potatoes** are disease resistant and maintain their color when cooked. There are many colors and textures of potatoes that are overlooked. Whole seed potatoes are best for planting. Just think of a red, white and blue potato salad.

- **"Rouge Vif d' E'tampes" or "Cinderella" Pumpkin** — the

pumpkin that was described in the famous fair tale. A decorative pumpkin, used since the early 1800s and introduced to the American market in 1883 by Burpee.

- **Tomatoes** — Variety, harvesting times, color and variety. These are just some of the best things about tomatoes. Listed below are just a few of many varieties:

- **"Brandywine."** The most famous of American heirlooms dating from 1889. A potato leaf variety with large beefsteak-like fruit.

- **"Yellow Pear."** Dated somewhere during the 1600s. Plants bear many sweet, one ounce pear-shaped fruit. Great for salads.

- **"Stupice."** A Czech heirloom. Very early, excellent tasting tomato. Bears fruit throughout season. Fruit can set easily in colder weather.

- **"Aunt Molly's Ground Cherry."** Dated around early 1600s. A small husk tomato with a very bushy habit. Can use in pies, tarts or cookies. Keeps well in the refrigerator as long as the husk is not removed.

- **"Moon & Stars" Watermelon.** Early 1900s. Name comes from the appearance of yellow splotches on the fruit and leaves.

- **"Delicata" Squash.** First introduced in 1894. It has an excellent flavor and color. The Delicata Squash has compact vines and produces many fruits. Great for small gardens.

- **"Cocozelle" Squash.** The classic zucchini. Introduced in the late 1800s. The flowers are edible.

- **"Deer Tongue" Lettuce.** Dated from the 1740s. A loose-leaf variety with leaves shaped like a deer's tongue. Tolerant of cold and heat.

The varieties above are just a

few of the many wonderful plants and seeds that are available to the gardener at some greenhouses and garden centers. Heirlooms are a tremendous addition to any garden and definitely worth trying.

Simple heirloom recipes using heirloom produce are:

Walnut & Ground Cherry Cookies

- 1 cup powdered sugar
 - 1 cup margarine
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 1 cup flour
 - 1 egg,
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup chopped walnuts
 - 1 cup whole wheat flour
 - 1 cup ground cherry preserves
- Heat oven to 300. Beat powdered sugar and margarine until fluffy. Add vanilla and egg. Blend well. Add remaining ingredients, reserving ½ cup walnuts. Drop teaspoonfuls of dough onto ungreased cookie sheets. with floured spoon make imprints in center of cookie and fill with ground cherry preserves. Bake for approximately five minutes and sprinkle with remaining walnuts. Continue baking until light golden brown. Remove from sheets to cool.

Heirloom Tomato Salad

- 7 varieties of tomatoes (use different sizes and colors)
 - 6-8 springs fresh basil
 - 10 large nasturtium leaves and nasturtium flowers and calendula flowers
 - Italian salad dressing
- On a large plate place clean Nasturtium leaves. Slice tomatoes and arrange on plate. Drizzle Italian salad dressing over tomatoes and garnish with fresh basil, Nasturtium, and Calendula flowers. Chill before serving.

Roasted Tomatoes

- Medium to large 10 tomatoes of different colors
 - Fresh herbs of basil, oregano, parsley
 - 4-5 cloves garlic depending on taste
 - Olive oil
- Remove skins from tomatoes. Wash herbs, Peel garlic and loosely chop. Place tomatoes in a baking dish and spread garlic and herbs evenly over tomatoes. Pour olive oil over tomatoes until half covered. Bake at 300 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Serve warm. Great as an appetizer dip.

Stuffed Squash Blossoms

- 10-12 large fresh squash blossoms
 - ¼ cup shredded provolone cheese
 - ¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
 - 1 cup ricotta cheese
 - 1 tablespoon Parmesan Cheese
 - 1 cup seasoned bread crumbs
- Wash squash blossoms well and place on paper towel to drain. In a medium size bowl, mix all cheeses together. Stuff Squash blossoms, slightly twisting open end of blossom. Dip blossom in egg and roll in bread crumbs. Place in a lightly oiled frying pan, and cook until cheeses are melting and the breading mix is golden brown.



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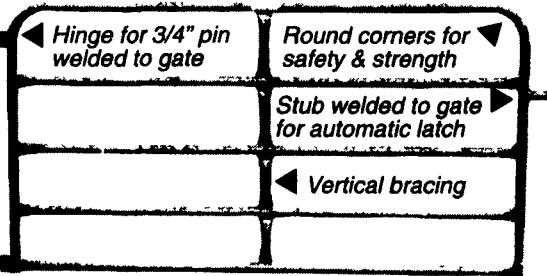
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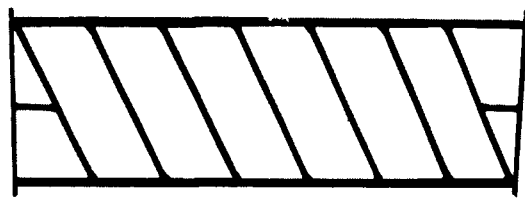
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