



Supporting the Rhythms of the Seasons

2016 CATALOGUE INTRODUCTION

Dear Gardeners and Seed Savers,

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the Solstice Seed Catalogue now, amazingly, in its eighth year! Many of you are new to the catalogue, so I'll spend a minute giving you a little explanation of what you'll find in these pages. About 20 years ago I was alarmed to see some of my favorite vegetable varieties disappear from the pages of seed catalogues. The "cult of newness" was infecting even our gardening activities and I soon learned that seed catalogues will generally feature a particular variety for about five years before they feel they need to discontinue it in favor of something new. Thus began my quest to seek out, rescue, and maintain rare, valuable, interesting, and irreplaceable varieties for our tables, pantries, and root cellars.

My current seed collection encompasses about 290 distinct open-pollinated varieties, selected for flavor, beauty, suitability to growing here in the Upper Valley, disease resistance, cold tolerance, ability to be part of our year-round food supply, historical interest, geographic specificity, or quirkiness of name, to list a few of my criteria. Not all are offered in the seed catalogue, but all are grown using strictly organic practices. Seeds of all offerings can be saved by YOU and will come true to type. As always, I strongly urge you to take up seed saving and thus contribute to the very foundations of sustainability. Rip up that barren monoculture of a lawn that keeps you enslaved to weekends of mowing, and replace it with your own lush and verdant Garden of Eating from which you can feed yourself and contribute to the quality of life of future generations by preserving irreplaceable biological diversity. You will attract beneficial insects and see the bird population grow noticeably. Walk out every morning into a world of beauty and nourishment.

Speaking of genetic diversity, in most years I resist the temptation to get up on the anti-GMO soapbox except with a remark here and there snuck into the intro. But this year there are some bright lights on the horizon of the work to eliminate these agri-evils from our environment. I have just learned—and not from our out-of-touch mainstream media, be it noted—that Venezuela has passed a first-in-the-world nation-wide ban on the cultivation of GMOs. The Philippines have passed a law banning the development of GMO products, and finally, in the US public pressure has kept the rider blocking states from labelling foods containing GMOs off the current spending bill. In Europe countries including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and the Netherlands have banned the cultivation of GMOs. Switzerland has long since had such a ban in place. These are incredibly positive developments, and may finally help swing the tide in favor of the over 90% of Americans who at the very least want GMO foods labeled. And ultimately in the shutting down of this totally unnecessary, destructive technology. We can all do our part by buying organic and reading very carefully food labels. Simply avoid purchasing products that could contain GMO ingredients. Fortunately we live in a part of the world where alternatives abound. Meanwhile, the US government has, incredibly, approved the introduction of a genetically engineered salmon, the first GMO animal to enter our food system.

Quote of the year: "Nature does nothing in vain"—Aristotle. He understood 2300 years ago that every part of nature has a purpose, nothing is extraneous or excluded from the intricate, inadequately understood web of life. To think we can tamper with any thread of this fabric without affecting the whole is folly.

Turning now to garden news of the season. For the first time this year I'm able to offer kale seed, and no less than the much-loved variety Red Russian, aka Russian Red or Ragged Jack. Tender, delicious, extremely cold-hardy, and beautiful. I was able to hold over a sufficient population of plants, both out in the garden and in the greenhouse to ensure top quality seed.

SEEDS IN OUR "LINE UP", FROM LEFT TO CENTER:

AMARANTH	LETTUCE	CRESS	ONION	TOMATO	SPINACH	BEET	PEA	BEAN	BEAN
<i>Hopi</i>	<i>Rougette</i>	<i>Shallot</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Jaune de</i>	<i>Winterspinat</i>	<i>Golden</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Marfax</i>	<i>True Red</i>
<i>Red Dye</i>	<i>du Midi</i>		<i>Bunching</i>	<i>Chardonne</i>	<i>Haldenstein</i>		<i>Arrow</i>		<i>Cranberry</i>

This is very exciting since saving seed of biennials is particularly challenging. Simultaneously, they provide superior nutrition and form a major component of our winter food supply, so mastering the art of saving their seeds is well worth the effort.

The carrot project, on which neighbor farmer Brian and I have been collaborating, yielded seed of the outstanding storage variety Autumn King. Applying a couple of different techniques, specific to our separate growing environments, we succeeded in getting seed-set on many plants before Queen Anne's Lace flowered. A germination test showed better-than-expected results. However, we will need to grow out the seed this season to test for purity of type before offering it through the catalogue.

Biennial crops, in addition to needing overwintering, usually also require a large population of so-called parent plants, presenting both an obstacle and an opportunity. Many of our gardens are too small to accommodate a biennial in the seed-producing year. However, these crops take up very little space in year one. Fellow seed saver Ruth Fleishman and I collaborated on growing the Flat of Egypt seeds this year. In 2014 I grew the roots, dug and overwintered them in my greenhouse, then handed them over to Ruth in the spring of 2015. She then grew them to seed in her West Hartford garden. There are many crops that would be good candidates for this kind of collaboration. If your garden is too small to grow biennials in the second year—when they can reach impressive proportions!—you could enlist a friend who might grow your onions, parsnips, beets, celery, or carrots to seed.

This coming season Ruth, Brian, and I will put our heads and gardens together on a 2-year project. In year one we will trial about 5 different beet varieties, observing them for exceptional qualities such as flavor, productivity, color, cold-hardiness, and disease resistance. Those deemed the best will be grown out for seed in year two, during which we'll observe for storage ability and evaluate for best seed production. Our three gardens will provide sufficient isolation space to grow at least 3 varieties to seed.

Rice trials produced some thrilling results this year. The Italian variety Loto brought seed to maturity on low-growing, upright, sturdy, heavily tillered plants. My hope is that next year I will have enough seed to include in the catalogue. This variety shows real promise for Vermont-grown rice on a larger scale without the need for a water-hungry paddy.

A sweet corn is in the works. Dorinny is an old, extremely cold-tolerant, Canadian variety with a deep, rich, corn flavor, and succulent, butter-yellow kernels. You are not eating sugar. Its harvest window is surprisingly long. I hope to have seed next year.

My correspondences and exchanges with far-flung seed savers continue to bring interesting and valuable varieties into the garden. Andrey in Belarus sent several Russian tomato varieties, one of which showed extraordinary disease resistance. An important trait as our summers get wetter and late blight seems here to stay. Two other determinate varieties which produced early in the season hold promise of tomato succession plantings and season extension in the greenhouse. Stay tuned!

Another seed saving pal, this one in Idaho, sent four new varieties of oats. All did well, but had different days to maturity and different yields. Some were easier to thresh than others. Oats are easy to grow, highly nutritious, trouble-free during the season, and should be part of the grain mix in any garden. I'm excited to be including three oat varieties this year, all of which matured at the same time and were easy to thresh. The stems of many oat varieties are unusually fat and make gorgeous, compostable drinking straws!

No matter how conscientious you are about collecting ripe seed, there will always be a thick crop of volunteer plants growing in that spot the following spring. This year we had such a bounty of lettuce volunteers, we had to steam some of the plants for a side dish or for cream of lettuce soup just to keep up with eating them before they bolted! This is an aspect of seed saving that should not be overlooked. Many crops fall into this "no work, free food" category: arugula, cilantro, lettuce, cresses, radicchio, nigella, poppy, orach, kale, spinach, and many more will drop and sprout enough seed to save you an entire spring planting.

And finally, a new-to-me-but-old-to-the-world wheat variety with the charming Swiss name of "Poppeliweizen" came into the garden from a friend. This variety has a very long, slender stem section between the last node and the grain head, making it perfect for straw weaving, an ancient craft from Europe. A good reminder that many of our staple crops provide not just food but a wide range of utilitarian uses. Wheat straw can be used for thatching, corn husks for tamales and doll-making, rye straw wraps cheeses, rice "straw" makes slippers, hats and baskets, sorghum bristles make brooms, and all of that biomass left after threshing can provide animal fodder, livestock bedding, or compost ingredients.

It's happened again, I've run out of writing space before running out of stories to tell. Just like what happens in the garden. Suddenly there's no more space in the beds, but still lots of seeds left to plant.

As you make your selections from the catalogue, please remember that, as usual, **I will be accepting orders only until June 1st**, when all attention must turn to planting and growing.

With deep gratitude for your continued support, and wishing you health and abundance in the coming season.

Sylvia



2016 SEED CATALOGUE

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AMARANTH *Amaranthus spp.*

500 seeds per packet

Hopi Red Dye. *50 days to edible leaves, 120 days to seed.* One of the most ancient of grains. A vegetable and seed amaranth of striking beauty. The entire plant is deep burgundy red. Young leaves are delicious in salads or quesadillas. Flower bracts were used by Hopi Indians as a ceremonial food dye. The leaves have 3 times more vitamin C, 10 times more carotene, 15 times more iron and 40 times more calcium than tomatoes, and 3 times more vitamin C, calcium, and niacin than spinach leaves. Plants reach 6 feet and require ample space to develop fully.

Opopeo. *108 days to seed.* A fast-growing variety from Opopeo, Mexico, this gorgeous leaf and grain amaranth can grow to 9 feet and branch heavily. Leaves are greenish red on top, burgundy red on their undersides, stems are bright red. Plant thickly, then thin for eating. Absolutely delicious, creamy flavor sautéed with olive oil and garlic. None of the bitterness of spinach. Seed heads are huge and bright red, but produce white seed, which is then easy to distinguish from chaff during threshing. Succession plant later in the season exclusively for eating.

Orange Giant. *100 days to seed.* A seed amaranth with orange-ribbed green leaves and huge burnt-orange seed heads. Loads of light beige, easily threshed seed on plants that reach 7 feet. Amaranth has 16 to 18% protein. The seed can be popped, added to hot breakfast cereal, or baked into bread.

BEAN/BUSH/DRY *Phaseolus vulgaris*

30 seeds per packet

Black Coco. *85 days.* An heirloom that is essentially a multi-purpose bean—edible in the green or shell stage—but exceptional as a dry bean. The plump, round, glossy black beans, held in 6-inch pods, cook quickly and are delicious in soups as well as bean salads, where their rich flavor is well expressed. Height is about 18 inches, the pods resist shattering on the plants but are easy to thresh.

Black Manitoba. Well-adapted to cultivation in a cool, damp season, this bean is technically a half-runner, with vines up to 3 feet. Given proper support, this is a very prolific variety. The seeds are small and jet-black, looking exactly like Black Turtle and numbering up to 8 in very easy-to-thresh pods. My seed comes from a Mennonite seed saver in Michigan.

Black Turtle. *85–105 days.* One of the most popular of soup beans. Small, shiny, flavorful black beans. Plants are somewhat heat and drought resistant, untroubled by insects or disease. They appreciate some support but will need it less if given adequate spacing. Classic for black bean soup, outstanding in black bean hummus or bean cakes.

Cannellino Lucchese. *85–90 days.* A variety of cannellini bean, the classic white Italian kidney bean used in so many traditional Tuscan dishes. This one comes from the area around Lucca, renowned for its fine olive oil, where it is typically used in farro soup. My seed comes originally from an Italian seed saver.

Coco Blanc. An early-ripening dry bean with plump white seeds. Essentially a white version of Black Coco. The tender, stringless pods can be harvested and cooked at a very early stage. The beans are rich in protein and delicious at the shell stage, or stored dried and then added to salads or used as a vegetable.

Drabo. *85 days.* An heirloom from Switzerland, this high-quality, plump, white soup bean is about the same size as cannellini, but slightly rounder. Flavorful, productive, and cooks quickly.

Hutterite Soup. *85 days.* Brought to America by the Anabaptist Hutterites who came from Austria and settled in Canada in the 1750s, this outstanding, creamy-textured soup bean is small, almost round and pale greenish-yellow in color with a dark ring around the eye. The plants show some runners, there are 5 to 6 beans per pod.

Littleton. Another half-runner which will require support for the 4-foot vines. The name refers to Littleton, New Hampshire, the bean was called “an old New Hampshire heirloom” by renowned plant breeder Elwyn Meader. The pods have the streaking of a horticultural bean, but the seeds are unusually large. Beige background with wine-colored mottling, some of the beans are almost solid red. A very productive variety.

Marfax. *80–85 days.* A versatile, small, almost round, caramel-colored heirloom from Maine, resembling Swedish Brown, but earlier and higher yielding. Well adapted to our cool climate, this richly flavored bean holds its shape well during baking.

Montcalm Dark Red Kidney. *105 days.* An early strain of Red Kidney, these brilliant, deep raspberry-colored beans make excellent chili, bake well, and are perfect in soups. The sturdy pods with 6 to 7 beans each are borne on upright plants that are mold-resistant in damp weather. Also good as a green shell bean.

Schwarzwälder Ausmachbohne. A beautiful dry bean from the Black Forest region of Germany. Its strong, rather leggy, 20-inch plants are happiest given lots of room. The dry beans are sulphur yellow with faint veining, fairly large, and cook very quickly to a tan color. The subtle flavor is a perfect vehicle for combining with lots of onion, garlic, tomatoes, sage, and hot pepper.

Volga German Siberian. *108 days.* Moderately productive bush bean with runners up to 3 feet. Rounded pinkish-tan seed with red streaks in streaked pods. Large, rather leggy plants. Catherine the Great invited German Mennonites to settle and farm in the Volga region of Russia. When Communism took over, many of the farmers were deported to Siberia. This is the bean they took with them.

BEAN/BUSH/SNAP *Phaseolus vulgaris*

30 seeds per packet

Astrelle. *50 days.* A French filet bean with excellent beany flavor and high yield on compact plants. Unlike many filet beans, it will produce continuously right until frost except in very hot summers. Best picked at about 3 inches, but it will remain tender long after that.

Comtesse de Chambord. *50 days.* An extremely rare, diminutive filet bean from the 19th century, originally known as Hungarian Dwarf rice bean. The pods are very slender and only 4 inches long, growing on plants no more than 12 inches tall. A steady producer throughout the season of tender, sweet snap beans. The tiny white seeds, barely larger than grains of rice, can also be used dried. An excellent variety for the small garden or for container growing.

Flambeau. *85 days to shell stage.* A rare French flageolet bean for eating at the shell stage, when the seeds have begun to fill out in the pods but haven't become starchy yet. Pale green or white sweet, tender seeds in 5-inch pods on 18-inch plants. Great for eating fresh, steaming and freezing, or using as a dry bean. Very productive. Flageolet beans were introduced in France in the late 1870s.

Marché de Genève. *60 days.* A Swiss variety from ProSpecieRara—the Swiss seed saving organization—with large, tender, stringless, very flavorful, deep green, straight 5-inch pods on strong plants. Violet/black seeds. An excellent market variety. Follows Astrelle and will also produce over a long season.

Maxibel. *50 days.* An outstanding filet bean. Very slender, perfectly straight 7 to 8-inch medium green pods borne heavily on sturdy plants. Early and productive for the entire season, superb flavor. Seeds are narrow, tan in the background with dark, purple/brown splotches.

BEAN/BUSH/WAX *Phaseolus vulgaris*

30 seeds per packet

Beurre de Rocquencourt. *60 days.* Named for the French town of Rocquencourt near Versailles, this productive and beautiful bean lives up to its name with a rich, buttery flavor and delicate, pale yellow color. Pods are 7 inches long, slender, and perfectly straight. Does well where nights are cool and benefits from regular picking.

Pencil Pod Black Seeded Wax. *50–60 days.* Introduced around 1900, this bean was developed from a cross of Improved Black Wax x Black Eyed Wax. Rust and mosaic resistant, the bushy plants bear a heavy crop of stringless, 6-inch beans with excellent flavor.

BEAN/POLE/DRY *Phaseolus vulgaris*

30 seeds per packet

Chester. *90–100 days.* Also known as Flagg Bean, this sturdy pole bean is reported to have come from the Iroquois people. A strong climber with large pods and seeds shaped like small lima beans. Coloring is either a white background with gray speckles and streaking or the reverse. Gail Flagg of Fort Kent, Maine, claims the bean had been grown for a long time in Chester, Vermont.

Dolloff. *110 days.* A beautiful, unusual bean shaped more like a lima bean, flattened, with a light buff background and pale pinkish-burgundy streaks. The 8-foot vines produce lavishly, the beans have outstanding flavor and can be used either in the shell stage or dried. Originally from Hattie Gray of West Burke, Vermont, in 1985. She and her mother got it from Ray Dolloff of Burke Hollow, Vermont, around 1920. Pods are 6 inches long and contain an average of 6 to 7 seeds. A 12-foot row yielded 5 pounds of beans.

Mayflower Bean. *80–90 days.* This bean is said to have come to America with the Pilgrims in 1620. It is what's called a cutshort, that is to say the beans have blunt ends as if they were crowded in the slightly curved pod. The small beige beans are stippled with maroon markings that converge on one end of the seed. Beautiful, flavorful, and very productive, often with 6 pods on each node.

Munsee Wampum. A late-maturing, prodigiously high-yielding bean, with up to 6 pods per stem. My seed comes from Will Weaver, noted food historian. It was collected by his grandfather in the 1930s. Some confusion surrounds the spelling of the name. There's a town in central Pennsylvania called Muncy, at the same time "Minsi" is one of three linguistic groups of the Lenape/Delaware Indians. Vines are very tall, leaves are large, pods are slender, containing 6–7 small, squarish slightly flattened seeds with a tan background and dark brown streaking.

True Red Cranberry. *95 days.* Bean collector John Withee saw mention of this variety in a 1700s gardening encyclopedia, and finally found it, after an 11-year search, in Steep Falls, Maine. It may well be a Native American variety. The exact size, shape, and color of a cranberry, this dazzlingly beautiful glossy, garnet-colored heirloom grows on 6 to 7-foot moderately productive vines. Each pod holds 5 seeds. Richly flavored, it makes excellent baked beans and an outrageously delicious (speckled!) hummus.

Vermont Cassoulet. *100 days.* The original name of this bean is Tarbais Alaric, however this is a protected name and by rights it can only be used if the bean has been grown in a designated area in southwestern France. Still, it is the classic bean used in cassoulet, that fabulous French dish which should take at least three days to make! Vigorous vines, white flowers, long, flat pods, white, flattened medium-large, late-ripening seeds are rounder than limas.

BEAN/POLE/SNAP *Phaseolus vulgaris*

30 seeds per packet

Herrenböhnli. *72 days.* Very delicate, 5-foot vines produce diminutive 2½-inch pods with a very sweet, tender flavor. At maturity the pods fill with almost perfectly round, pinkish-beige seeds with a faint darkening around the hilum. Surprisingly productive. Supposedly also good as a soup bean. The name means "gentlemen's little bean."

Hilda. A Romano-type snap bean with fantastically huge, flat, stringless, meaty pods on vines up to 8 feet. Seeds are flattened and pure white. Pods measure 1 inch by 10 inches and contain 8 to 9 seeds each. Exceptional flavor, mid-season, productive, especially tender. Freezes well. A favorite in Europe.

Stangenbohne Ilanz. *58 days.* A Swiss heirloom—"Stangenbohne" means pole bean—obtained through ProSpecieRara. This vigorous pole bean puts out 9-foot vines with large leaves and very long pods, some containing as many as 11 pure white seeds, slightly smaller and straighter than kidneys. The pods are tender and flavorful in the snap stage, and the seeds make an excellent dry bean. Grown in the Swiss town of Ilanz since before 1900.

BEAN/POLE/WAX *Phaseolus vulgaris*

30 seeds per packet

Gold of Bacau. 60–70 days. Originally from Bacau, Romania. Very productive, 6 to 10-inch long, flattened, golden Romano-type beans with pods about 3/4 by 9 inches, averaging 9 seeds per pod. Excellent sweet flavor. Even when the seeds begin to form the pods are still stringless, tender, and sweet. Best for fresh use but can also be frozen.

BEET/GARDEN *Beta vulgaris*

120 seeds per packet

Beet and chard seeds are actually clusters of seeds. You will get between 2 and 3 seedlings from each seed, so keep that in mind when sowing.

Feuer Kugel. 65–75 days. A rare Swiss heirloom whose name means “fire globe,” this smooth-skinned beet remains sweet and tender to a large size. It is flavorful raw or cooked and stores exceptionally well.

Flat of Egypt. 50 days. One of the earliest of beets. The shape is round with a flattened bottom and a very slender taproot. The flesh is uniformly deep, dark red, the skin is smooth, the flavor exceptional. Described in Vilmorin’s *The Vegetable Garden* in 1885.

CELERIAC *Apium graveolens*

500 seeds per packet

Celeriac is not at all difficult to grow, but thrives in rich, loose soil with an abundance of organic matter. It requires steady moisture throughout its long growing season. Start sets indoors 12 weeks before the last frost and plant out with ample spacing—8 to 12 inches between plants. Mulch between plants, keep well watered, and be patient!

Brilliant. 110 days. A round, smooth European strain with white flesh and a sweet, nutty flavor. Outstanding both raw and cooked, in salads, soups, stews, or in a mixture of roasted root vegetables. Celeriac is an old European favorite just beginning to be fully appreciated in the U.S. Its unusual flavor adds a new dimension to the palette of our New England selection of winter vegetables. Roots reach 4 inches in diameter if given lots of room.

Monstropolgi. 100 days. Firm, large, round roots with few side shoots and great flavor. This is a rare variety, its outstanding characteristic is that the small roots are concentrated at the base, meaning there is very little waste during trimming. Celeriac stores very well in the root cellar.

CELERY *Apium graveolens*

500 seeds per packet

Homegrown celery is nothing like what you find in the supermarket. The plants are large and full, stems are somewhat thinner than commercial varieties, and the flavor is intense. It is best used as an accent and an aromatic, but is well worth growing.

Gigante Dorato. An Italian variety, the name of which means “golden giant.” Pale yellow-green stems and leaves lend an intense celery flavor to *mirepoix*, that lovely French aromatic base of soups, sauces, and stews that consists of minced onion, carrot, and celery stewed in butter. Perfect for adding to stock.

Red. Sturdy, bushy 18-inch plants, slender stalks with a deep red/green color. The flavor is concentrated and spicy. This is a very cold-hardy variety, with many plants surviving winter with minimal cover. Use in soups, stews, potato salad, or a beet/apple/walnut salad.

CHICORY *Chicorium intybus*

150 seeds per packet

Radicchio Castelfranco Libra. 85–95 days. An improved strain of the Italian heirloom Castelfranco, this stunning radicchio has creamy yellow-green leaves splashed with red streaks. Round heads do not need cutting back to produce well. Radicchios have been relatively recently “domesticated,” so there is still a fair amount of variability in the plants. Start sets end of June for fall harvest. Extremely cold hardy. Plants of this variety survived the winter right in the garden with only row cover for protection.

CORN/FLINT *Zea mays***100 seeds per packet**

Corn is a wind-pollinated crop and requires about 2–3 miles of isolation to ensure pure seed. Make sure you are sufficiently distant from either neighbors who are growing corn or from fields of GMO corn. If you are growing just for food, one packet of seed will be sufficient, but if you would like to save your own seed you should start with a minimum of 200 plants.

Floriani Red Flint. *100–110 days.* This is a gorgeous flint corn, growing to a stately 10 to 12 feet in height. Kernels are deep maroon in color, each with a pointed tip. The variety is an Italian family heirloom from the Valsugana valley east of Trent in Lombardy. The coarsely ground meal, speckled with red from the seed coat, makes the best polenta you will ever taste. Slightly sweeter than the Roter Tessinermais.

Roter Tessinermais. *123 days.* Between 1930 and 1940 there were many varieties of red corn in Ticino, the Italian-language canton in southern Switzerland. The name means simply “red corn from Ticino.” This variety has large ears, often two per robust 8-foot plant with little susceptibility to wind. The kernels are rounded, a deep brick color, arranged in 12 to 14 rows per ear. The variety is suited to planting at high elevations. Some yellow off-types will appear, but be sure to select for only red seed. The flavor is outstanding either as polenta or baked into cornbread. A bit nuttier than Floriani. My seed came from ProSpecieRara, the Swiss seed saving organization, which is why the name is given in German rather than Italian.

CORN/POPCORN *Zea mays***100 seeds per packet**

Vermont Red Kernel. *102 days.* Very dark burgundy kernels on diminutive ears 4–5 inches long. Kernels are slender and pointed, looking much like what’s often called strawberry corn. Pops to a pure white, delicious, buttery-flavored popcorn. Approximately 5 feet in height. There are frequently 2 ears per plant.

CRESS *Lepidium sativum***400 seeds per packet**

Shallot Cress Mahontongo. *45 days.* An old Pennsylvania German heirloom with spoon-shaped leaves that grow in a rosette and have a flavor resembling garlic chives. This hardy biennial can provide a welcome and refreshing tonic in the form of spicy early spring greens if plants are allowed to go to seed and self-sow.

Upland Special. *45 days.* A compact, extremely hardy, dark green cress with very spicy flavor similar to arugula. Outstanding in a mix of greens. This variety is best planted in the fall for tender plants in the spring and will also self-sow if allowed to go to seed. A selection of Peters Seed and Research.

CUCUMBER *Cucumis sativus***30 seeds per packet**

Athens. *55 days.* About 9 inches long, this uniformly slender slicer has smooth, deep dark green skin, dense, firm, crisp flesh, and a small seed cavity. Very productive over a long season on vines that want support. A fine cucumber both for market and the home garden.

Cornichon de Bourbonne. *50 days.* No slice of pâté is complete without a complement of tiny cornichons. This French heirloom produces prolifically on robust vines. Plump cukes should be picked when no more than 2 inches long, the dark nubs rubbed off during washing. Picked continuously throughout the season, they can easily be processed in small batches. Just make sure you also have fresh tarragon on hand!

Cornichon Vert de Massy. *56–60 days.* This is the classic cornichon cuke beloved in France to accompany pâtés and cold meats or for inclusion in Sauce Gribiche. Ideally pick at no more than 2 inches and process in small batches for enjoyment throughout the year. Seven plants are adequate to supply a family, but they will need support. In Switzerland cornichons are an indispensable accompaniment to raclette.

EGGPLANT *Solanum melongena***50 seeds per packet**

Growing eggplant in our region is famously a challenge. Start sets about 8 weeks before last frost, keeping seed evenly warm at about 70° for best germination. Protect seedlings from any stresses which will compromise future fruiting. Set out only after soil has warmed to 60° and cover with row cover if necessary to keep out nighttime chills until the plants are well established, or for the entire growing season if you wish.

Diamond. 80 days. A Ukrainian variety brought back to the States in 1993 by Seed Savers Exchange co-founder Kent Whealy. Developed by the Donetskaya Vegetable Experiment Station, it is also known as Almaz. The fruits are glossy, elongated, tapered, dark purple with pale green flesh that is free of bitterness. The 2-foot sturdy, upright plants set 2 by 7-inch fruits, approximately 12 ounces each, in clusters of 4 to 6. Of all the eggplants I've trialed over the years, this is the best performing, with no help from rowcover or black plastic mulch. So if you are inclined to using those aids you should get even better results.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE *Chicorium endivia***150 seeds per packet**

Bionda a Cuore Pieno. 60–65 days. Known here as Blond Full Heart, this is a superb escarole. Plant either early in the spring for salads or steamed greens, or later in the season for fall harvests. Dense heads reach 12 to 14 inches across and hold extremely well in the garden, making it a great candidate for fall CSAs or markets as well as for home gardeners craving greens into the fall. Leaves are slightly crumpled, medium green on the outside and lemony light at the heart. Extremely hardy, thrives either under rowcover into December or in the greenhouse all winter. Turns sweeter after frost. Divine sautéed with pasta or *all'arrabiata*, with pancetta and hot pepper flakes.

Frisée Très Fine Maraîchère. 60 days. A 19th century French heirloom endive producing small, compact heads with frizzled leaves, white at the core and fading through golden yellow to green at the outer edges. A beautiful and mildly bitter addition to any salad mix. Although not extremely cold hardy, the heads hold very well in the garden, making for a long harvest season.

KALE *Brassica oleracea***250 seeds per packet**

Red Russian. 65 days. *a.k.a.* Russian Red or Ragged Jack. One of the hardiest of kales. Capable of overwintering in the garden. Oak-like leaves are fringed in red, the color deepening with advancing cold. Outstanding tender flavor.

LEEK *Allium ampeloprasum***200 seeds per packet**

Bleu de Solaise. 110 days. An exceptionally hardy variety. Very uniform, thick white shanks are topped with deep green leaves that gain a purple tinge as the weather cools. Capable of overwintering outside.

Jaune du Poitou. An heirloom from the Poitou region of western France. A long, slender, pale yellow-green leek of great tenderness and delicacy of flavor. Not specifically a winter variety, but I have had plants survive until spring without protection. Described by Vilmorin in 1885.

Scotland. 85–90 days. A very sturdy heirloom winter leek with fat, pure white, 2 by 7-inch shanks and deep green leaves. Outstanding flavor and exceptional hardiness. Spaced generously, these can achieve remarkable size.

LETTUCE/HEAD *Lactuca sativa***250 seeds per packet**

Arctic King. 60 days. A small, extremely hardy, compact bibb lettuce for early spring or late fall harvest. Light green, crinkled leaves and firm heads. Very similar to North Pole but a bit later. Survived many nights in the teens before finally succumbing to a covering of snow.

Erstling. An old German variety which can be planted in the fall for a head start on the spring. Heads are small and compact, with brilliant red edges on the tender leaves and a hint of light green in the very center. Very hardy. Seed is originally from Switzerland.

LETTUCE/HEAD *(continued)***250 seeds per packet**

Lattich in der Erde. The name means “lettuce in the earth.” This medium-green variety came originally from the genebank in Gatersleben, Germany. Wavy, meaty, slightly seersucker-ed leaves form relatively compact heads. Good heat resistance but also extremely cold-hardy, so this is an excellent choice for season-long growing.

North Pole. *50–55 days.* As the name suggests, an extremely cold-hardy butterhead with compact, light green, slightly crinkled leaves. Best for early spring or late fall. Very similar to Arctic King but a bit earlier. A real beauty.

Reine des Glaces. *62 days.* A gorgeous crisphead lettuce also known as Ice Queen. A small, slow-bolting French variety for summer, with bright green, spiky, deeply cut leaves and a convoluted habit. Holds up well in the heat. Cut heads back and let new leaves grow from the base for leaf lettuce.

Rotkopf. *45 days.* A Swiss butterhead with light green leaves at the base darkening to deep burgundy at the edges. Heads are large and full and the flavor is tender and excellent. The name, appropriately, means “redhead.”

Rouquette du Midi. A small crisp butterhead of French origin—also known as Rouquette de Montpellier—with glossy bronze-red leaves, best sown in late summer for fall salads or in very early spring, since it does not appreciate hot weather.

LETTUCE/LEAF *Lactuca sativa***250 seeds per packet**

Arugula. *50 days.* A salad green not so long ago virtually unknown in the U.S. but now wildly and deservedly popular. Cold tolerant in the extreme, with a nutty, peppery, irresistible flavor. Let a number of plants go to seed for a profusion of volunteers.

Cracoviensis. *45–65 days.* Very unusual lettuce from Eastern Europe with long, slender, wavy, lime-green leaves dusted with reddish purple or lavender. A fast-growing variety that will form a large, loose head, then bolt as soon as the weather heats up. Once the plants have reached about a foot in height, the thick, fleshy stems can be peeled and eaten as a vegetable. Hence its alternate name “asparagus lettuce.”

Drunken Woman Fringed Headed. *55 days.* Bright green, crisp leaves terminate in ruffled, almost frizzy edges with a narrow band of burgundy. This is a very showy, semi-heading variety with leaves that look like someone went after them with pinking shears. Slow to bolt and with a refreshing tender, sweet flavor.

Merlot. *45–50 days.* A diminutive, frilly lettuce with some of the darkest maroon leaves around. Only at the very base is there a hint of light green. Loose-leaved in habit, excellent for cut-and-come-again culture or in a mesclun mix, with glossy, mild-flavored leaves and a reluctance to bolt.

Radichetta. *56 days.* Although this variety originally comes from Italy it was recently renamed “Cressonnette du Maroc” in France. A gorgeous, generously proportioned, medium-green oak leaf, succulent in flavor and both heat tolerant and cold hardy.

Rubin. *55 days.* The name of this beautiful, upright, loose, frilly-edged, deep burgundy lettuce means “ruby.” Very cold hardy and the leaf color deepens as temperatures drop. Pale yellow-green at the very center.

Tango. *45 days.* Large heads of very curly, deep green, vitamin-rich leaves. Extremely cold-hardy variety, showy and easy to mistake for an endive, but with a tender, delicate, buttery flavor.

LETTUCE/ROMAINE *Lactuca sativa***250 seeds per packet**

Kaiser Selbstschuss. The slightly open form of this romaine suggests a very old variety. Seed came through ProSpecieRara, but originated from the genebank in Gatersleben, Germany. The smooth leaves are light green, upright, and relatively slender. This is an outstanding lettuce for fresh eating or steaming.

Rouge d’Hiver. *60 days.* An exceptionally cold-hardy French heirloom from the 1800s. Upright, with full, broad leaves that turn increasingly deep burgundy as the weather cools. Crisp and buttery flavor. Outstanding for fall harvest, but will also do well in the heat if kept watered.

MELON/MUSKMELON *Cucumis melo*

30 seeds per packet

Eden's Gem. 70–90 days. a.k.a. Eden Gem, Rocky Ford Eden Gem. A petite, green-fleshed, netted melon weighing in at about one pound each, developed in 1905 at Rocky Ford, Colorado. Sweet and spicy flavor. Very productive and well-suited to the small garden.

Iroquois. 70–85 days. Developed at Cornell by a Dr. Munger and introduced in 1944, this variety is particularly suited to growing in the Northeast. The rind is heavily netted and faintly ribbed, the deep orange flesh is fragrant and juicy and won hands-down in a taste test comparing it to other locally-grown melons. Slightly oval fruits measure 7 by 6 inches and weigh up to 5 pounds.

MELON/WINTER MELON *Cucumis melo*

30 seeds per packet

Valencia Winter. 120 days. A mild, sweet, juicy honeydew with pale green flesh and very dark green, slightly ribbed rind. First listed in American catalogues in the 1830s, but may go back further than that. Harvested in mid-October and stored at room temperature, it keeps extraordinarily well, easily into January, so it offers one response to the perennial localvore question “but what will I do for fresh fruit in winter?”!

ONION/BUNCHING *Allium fistulosum*

120 seeds per packet

Japanese Bunching. Scallions, or green onions, generally are slow growers, but this variety is robust and off to a quick and strong start. Seeds can be started indoors and transplanted out after danger of frost. Essentially a perennial, so plant a patch in one corner of the garden where it will be undisturbed and allow the plants to produce seed year after year.

ONION/COMMON/RED *Allium cepa*

120 seeds per packet

Red Bottle. An Amish heirloom. Beautiful, elongated, torpedo-shaped bulbs with a unique mild yet spicy flavor. Pale pink skin, pale pink flesh. A good keeper, adaptable to a wide variety of conditions. This is a very hardy variety, overwintering easily in the garden. If flower stalks are cut back in the second year the bulbs will multiply, forming a cluster of new onions around the original bulb.

Southport Red Globe. 100–120 days. A now rare heirloom from 1873, developed along the Mill River in Southport, Connecticut. This is one of the most beautiful of all the red onions I've trialed. Large globe-shaped roots average from 7 to 9 ounces, but can reach 15 ounces. Intensely red-purple, glossy skin, firm flesh with deep color throughout, pungent flavor. Exceptional keeping qualities, storing up to 11 months. A long day variety.

ONION/COMMON/YELLOW *Allium cepa*

120 seeds per packet

Yellow of Parma. 110–120 days. A rare and hard-to-find Italian storage onion, uniformly round, solid, golden yellow globes average 7 ounces each. A long day variety storing up to 10 months.

ORACH *Atriplex hortensis*

50 seeds per packet

Gelbe Lacherez. 45 days. Very bright, luminous, limey-yellow/green heart-shaped leaves on plants that reach 5 feet tall and branch heavily. Tender and delicious, the leaves add a beautiful note to salads when young. or can be steamed when more mature. ProSpecieRara received this variety in 1995 from R.-M. Lacherez, who in turn had received it in 1993 from the area near Allier, France.

Red Orach. 45 days. a.k.a. Mountain Spinach, this relative of lamb's quarters has been in cultivation for over 1000 years. Heavily branched plants can reach 6 feet. The deep ruby leaves are a dusty green on the underside and are delicious added to salads when young or steamed when older. Orach contains three times the vitamin C of spinach. Plant closely in rows, then eat the thinnings. A great warm-weather spinach substitute. Allow a few plants to bolt and you will have volunteers the following season.

PARSLEY *Petroselinum crispum*

100 seeds per packet

Comune. Seeds of this variety originally came from a street market in northern Italy. The leaves are a very deep green, flat, relatively delicate, pungent, and abundant. Hardy and productive, my seed is from plants that wintered over in the garden under snow cover but otherwise without protection. An excellent selection for the hoop- or greenhouse for parsley all winter. Yes, only one “m”.

PARSNIP *Pastinaca sativa*

300 seeds per packet

Parsnip seeds are slow to germinate. You can speed germination by soaking the seeds overnight before planting. Keep seeds well watered until they emerge. Homegrown seed will remain viable for at least 3 years if properly stored in a cool, dark location.

Guernsey. 95–120 days. My original seed came from Meredith Kennard, director of the Hancock Shaker Village Historic Garden in Hancock, Massachusetts. The variety was introduced into England in 1826 from the Channel island of Guernsey. A very sweet parsnip, fine-fleshed, producing evenly tapered roots up to 14 inches in length, with few side roots and outstanding keeping qualities.

PEA/GARDEN *Pisum sativum*

30 seeds per packet

Pursuant to my pea trials of a couple of years ago, I have several new, interesting pea varieties to offer through the catalogue. For me, who grew up on Birds Eye frozen peas, it has been a delightful voyage of discovery into the range of shapes, sizes, colors, growth habits, and flavors represented in these different varieties. Nothing humble about the garden pea!

Bolero. 68 days. A very productive pea with good, sweet flavor. Vines are a manageable 28 inches, but definitely benefit from trellising. There are up to 3 pods per node, and 6 to 8 seeds per pod.

Champion of England. 75 days. A very fine variety originally introduced in England in 1843 by William Fairbeard, and in this country in 1846. Grown right here at the Billings Farm in Woodstock in the late 19th century. Vines 5 feet tall, white flowers, pods 3 to 4 inches, 1 per node, filled with 6 to 10 relatively large, sweet, tender, rich-flavored peas.

Iona Petit Pois. 68 days. A true petit pois with outstanding, sweet flavor. A heavy yielder for a petit pois, Iona sets 2 to 3 straight, 3-inch pods per node, vines are 28 inches tall. Well worth growing for the diminutive, tender peas no self-respecting French garden would be caught without.

Lincoln. 70 days. An heirloom from before 1908. This variety has been popular in New England for generations. The 3-inch pods contain 8–9 relatively small very sweet peas ripening throughout July on 3-foot vines.

Malecite Bush. 80 days. The Malecite (or Maliseet) tribe are from New Brunswick, Canada, and the Houlton region of Aroostook County, Maine. The seed came originally from a Malecite Indian woman from St. John’s Valley and is currently being preserved by the Heirloom Seed Project of the Medomak Valley High School in Waldoboro, Maine. The seeds are large in plump pods, flavor is excellent. The 20-inch vines appreciate support.

Show Perfection. 88 days. This pea was introduced by Sutton Seeds in England in 1957, a cross between Suttons Achievement and Evergreen. Very productive over an extended season on 6-foot vines. Excellent sweet flavor.

Spanish Skyscraper. 91 days. Give these 7-foot vines lots of support, for they will be loaded with light green pods containing sweet peas that ripen and produce for as long as a month if kept picked. This is supposedly a very old variety but has been bred by Canadian Ken Allan for over 20 years to increase productivity.

Two Hundredfold. 50 days. A very early pea on 3-foot vines. White flowers, 2 pods per node averaging 8 peas each. Foliage is dark green, pods are long, round, and slightly curved with very large, sweet, juicy peas. Ripens all at once.

PEA/POD *Pisum sativum***30 seeds per packet**

Amish Snap. 60–70 days. An heirloom from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, this delicious snap pea will continue to produce over a 6-week period if kept picked. Vines are 6 feet tall, crisp pods are a delicate green and filled with 4 to 7 peas each.

Arbogast Sugar. 60 days. Introduced before 1884, and most likely identical with Tall Sugar Pea, offered by David Landreth of Pennsylvania, this snap pea is tender and crisp when young. The vines grow to 6 feet, blossoms are purple, and the wrinkled seeds are speckled brown.

Cascadia. 65 days. These sweet, succulent snap peas grow on 48-inch vines. The plentiful, fiberless pods measure 3½ inches. Plants are resistant to powdery mildew and pea enation virus. Developed by Dr. Jim Baggett of Oregon State University.

Golden Sweet. 65 days. Gorgeous bicolor purple flowers give way to lemon yellow, translucent, flat pods on 6- to 8-foot vines. Best enjoyed when young, but the peas can also be used in soups if allowed to mature and dry on the vine. This is the only edible-podded pea with a yellow pod in the SSE collection of over 1,200 pea varieties. Highly productive.

Kefe Beinwil. 60 days. “Kefe” means snow pea. A Swiss heirloom grown for generations in the village of Beinwil, Aargau. This pea must be planted as early as possible for good results. The vines are 4½ feet high and bear diminutive pods of very delicate flavor from beautiful burgundy and pink blossoms. Moderately productive.

Kiefel Vermeer. 70 days. A snow pea very similar to Schweizer Riesen, but growing on shorter, 3-foot vines. Pods are also 1 inch wide by 5 inches long, each containing 8 seeds. Purple flowers. Wonderfully tender and flavorful. From the Swiss seed saving organization ProSpecieRara.

Schweizer Riesen. 65 days. “Swiss Giant.” Huge, 1 by 5-inch, pale green, succulent snow peas that curl as they grow and remain sweet and tender even as they mature. A fabulous variety, very productive over a long period. Vines are 5 feet tall.

Shirk Family. 80 days. A small-podded snow pea, extremely prolific, growing on 4-foot vines. This pea comes from a Mennonite community in Michigan, where it was handed down in one family for many years. It should be harvested young, but any pods that don't get picked can be left both for next year's seed and for use as a soup pea.

PEA/SOUP *Pisum sativum***30 seeds per packet**

Góroh. 90 days. An old variety from the Kaluzhskaya region of Russia. Very cold hardy, with 5-foot vines bearing smooth, round, beige peas, slightly smaller than Amplissimo. Simply let the pods dry on the vines, pick and thresh.

PEPPER/HOT *Capsicum annuum***30 seeds per packet**

Flame Tongue. This well-named variety was developed by seed saver Rod Trotter in Oregon. The tapered, slightly crimped and torqued fruits measure ½ by 1 inch and ripen to a brilliant red. Very hot. Plants grow to about 20 inches and are covered with fruits. Just a pinch of the dried peppers adds welcome heat to an array of dishes.

Thai Hot. Small, upright peppers borne on diminutive plants pack great, complex flavor in addition to considerable heat. Use in the green stage or allow them to ripen to a dark red for drying. Simply spread them out on a sheet pan in the sun or in a dry, well-ventilated spot. Remove seeds and ribs to lower heat intensity.

PEPPER/SWEET *Capsicum annuum***30 seeds per packet**

Boldog Hungarian Spice. A ¾-inch by 6-inch long, somewhat blocky but slender paprika pepper with intoxicating aroma and a touch of heat once dried and ground. The plants are robust and about 2 to 3 feet tall, bearing heavily close to the stems. Peppers start dark green, then ripen to a rich reddish-brown. The relatively thin flesh dries easily. Simply cut peppers in half lengthwise, scrape out the seeds, then arrange pepper halves on racks in the sun till dry. Take the racks in at night to prevent peppers from getting damp.

PEPPER/SWEET *(continued)***30 seeds per packet**

Feherozon. *90 days.* Conical, 3 by 5-inch fruits. Sweet, juicy, thick-walled fruits crowd the plants and ripen from pale yellow to deep orange. Pick at this stage and allow to finish ripening to deep red. Keeps well at fully ripe stage. Protected plants produced till mid-November. An exceptional variety. Cut the ripe peppers in half, grill them, peel them, and freeze for enjoying all winter.

Sheepnose. *75 days.* An Ohio heirloom from the family of Nick Rini. A pimento pepper, with flattened, lobed, cheese-shaped fruits, 3 inches wide, with very thick, meaty walls and sweet flavor. A prolific variety in Vermont, even without black plastic or row cover. Fruits hold very well on the plant and after picking, staying fresh in the fridge for up to 10 days.

RADISH *Raphanus sativus***110 seeds per packet**

French Breakfast. *20–30 days.* A buttery-tender French heirloom radish from the 1880s, oblong in form, scarlet red at the top and white at the blunt tip. Succession sow all season for continuous harvest.

RHUBARB *Rheum rhabarbarum***50 seeds per packet**

Rhubarb is very easy to start from seed. Wet the seeds thoroughly, then keep them moist for several days until they germinate. Pot up the sprouted ones in individual cells. Transplant to the garden when the starts have at least 4 true leaves. Start as many plants as you have space for; then choose the strongest ones that best represent the typical traits of the variety. To save seed, allow only one variety to bloom in a given year to prevent unwanted crossing.

Early Champagne. This is a pre-1860s English variety, with fanciful, very ruffled leaves and slender, pale green stems the color of gooseberries, originally used for sparkling rhubarb wine. Very productive over a long season, going dormant later than other varieties.

Glaskins Perpetual. An English heirloom from the 1920s with wide stems that vary somewhat in color from greenish-red to pink. An early and long-season producer with excellent flavor for a wide range of applications.

RUTABAGA *Brassica napobrassica***250 seeds per packet**

American Purple Top. *80–120 days.* A highly undervalued winter vegetable. Much sweeter and less sharp than turnips, rutabagas are versatile and packed with nutrition. This variety is nearly globe shaped, 4 to 6 inches in diameter or larger, with firm, fine-grained, sweet light-yellow flesh and a small taproot. Rutabagas store exceedingly well in the root cellar.

Fortin's Family. *100–120 days.* An heirloom from Québec, this is a variety of outstandingly sweet and full flavor. It appears to have some insect and disease resistance and is an excellent winter keeper. Direct sow early in the season and space generously to give the plants time to size up well.

Laurentian. *90–120 days.* A Canadian variety that also goes by Laurentian Purple Top, Laurentian Golden, Laurentian Swede or Perfect Model, but is an improved American Purple Top. The creamy-yellow, 4 to 6-inch globe roots have outstandingly sweet flavor, deep purplish red tops, no side shoots, and store exceptionally well. Roast or steam, purée, then combine with mashed potatoes. Yum.

SALSIFY *Tragopogon porrifolius***50 seeds per packet**

Lüthy. Salsify is closely related to scorzonera, but is a separate species. The root is tapered and resembles a parsnip in shape and color. The flavor is creamy smooth, often compared to that of oysters. This Swiss heirloom has spectacularly beautiful blue/purple flowers which appear in the second year. Peel the roots, drop them into acidulated water, then steam, roast, bake them with a cream sauce, or purée them for a delicate treat. Salsify is extremely hardy and will overwinter without protection.

SCORZONERA *Scorzonera hispanica***50 seeds per packet**

Hoffmann's Schwarze Pfahl. *140 days.* An old vegetable variety much loved in Europe for its buttery, almost oyster-like flavor, scorzonera is even less likely to be known here than its near cousin salsify. But this long, cylindrical, slender root with rough dark brown (almost black, hence its other name Black Salsify) skin and creamy flesh should be more widely grown. It is subtle and luxurious simply steamed in butter, or—to gild the lily—in a cream sauce. This variety came from the Amana colonies of the Midwest, but originated in Germany where it was a popular market variety for its uniform shape and good performance. The roots will easily overwinter in the garden and are still tender and flavorful in the second year. The very young leaves of spring can be added to a salad, and the roots keep well in a root cellar.

SORGHUM *Sorghum bicolor***70 seeds per packet**

In my quest to find staple crops that we can grow easily in Vermont and that will broaden our diet, I've been experimenting with a variety of different grains. Sorghum comes in four versions: grain, sweet, dual purpose (grain and sweet), and broom. Grain sorghum can be ground into flour and used in baking, or it can be an ingredient in poultry feed. Sweet sorghum can be processed into a molasses-like syrup. Broom corn will allow us to make our own brooms again rather than importing them from a distant location!

Black African. *90 days.* An early-maturing grain variety, plants are about 7 feet tall, heads are slender and bear beautiful, glossy black pointy seeds.

Dwarf Mayo. *120 days.* Technically a broom corn, but the seeds are so beautiful, multi-colored, and easy to thresh that they make a wonderful grain as well. Of all the trialed sorghums, this was the easiest to harvest since the plants are no more than about 6 feet tall. Come time to test seed for ripeness, you don't have to bend lengthy stems to pinch the seed. Long panicles on thick heads are ideal for making your own brooms. Given lots of space this variety will tiller heavily, producing a second tier of heads, about 4 feet in height and later to mature.

Iowa Red. *116 days.* Brick-colored seed on 10-foot plants. A gorgeous and very productive broom corn with red-tinged bristles.

Lesotho. *102 days.* An 8-foot tall grain sorghum with pale, round, off-white seeds. The beauty of this variety is that it is virtually without the tough seed coat that is often difficult to remove in other varieties. Grinds to a flavorful flour for use in pancakes and breads. In Africa, sorghum is one of the most widely grown crops, used for both human and livestock feed, and in the brewing of beer.

Mennonite. *130 days.* A productive, dual-purpose heirloom variety from Missouri. Stunning, multi-tillered plants reach 10 feet. Brick-colored round grains can be ground into flour and canes can be processed into a sweet, light syrup.

White Broom Corn. *116 days.* This strain originated in Old Sturbridge Village and is the one from which brooms were made in early America. Another multi-purpose sorghum with 9-foot stalks and creamy tan seed that can also be used for poultry feed. The long bristles are outstanding for broom making.

SPINACH *Spinacia oleracea***200 seeds per packet**

Haldenstein. Named after the Swiss village where it has been grown out by virtually the entire population since before WWI, this winter variety does well if planted in the fall and allowed to overwinter in the ground. Large, deep green, moderately smooth, heart-shaped, pointed leaves, mild flavor. The prickly seeds indicate an old variety.

Monnopa. *45 days.* Also known as Low Acid. Moderately savoyed, round leaves form a dense head. This variety is particularly low in oxalic acid—an agent which causes loss of calcium from the blood—but is high in vitamins A, C, and E. Plant in mid-summer for fall harvest. The plants are extremely hardy and will hold very well in the garden without bolting once cold weather sets in. Sweetest flavor of all.

SQUASH/MAXIMA *Cucurbita maxima***30 seeds per packet**

Red Kuri. 90–95 days. “Kuri” means chestnut in Japanese, and this might well describe its flavor. A tear-shaped winter squash with brittle, bright orange-red skin and deep orange, dry, nutty, delicious flesh. A beauty that holds its color when steamed. Fruits can reach 5 pounds. Mature, large squashes grown under favorable conditions, well cured, and stored at the proper temperature can keep for up to a year. Roast it with red onions, layer it in lasagne, or use it to make squash-flavored pasta or gnocchi.

SQUASH/MOSCHATA *Cucurbita moschata***30 seeds per packet**

Musquée de Provence. 90–100 days. In a Vermont garden the vines of this French heirloom “cheese” squash will grow to about 20 feet and fruits will reach about 17 pounds. The heavily ribbed, flattened, green ripening to ochre squashes have leathery skin with a milky cast. Very few seeds. The flesh is very moist, somewhat sweet and almost cantaloupe-colored. Its unusual flavor makes it a perfect partner for fruit in soups.

SQUASH/PEPO *Cucurbita pepo***30 seeds per packet**

Black Beauty. 44–64 days. Glossy, black-green zucchini with creamy-white, fine-flavored, dense, very tender flesh, best harvested at 6 to 8 inches. Productive, open, upright plants will bear till frost. Introduced to US markets in the 1920s. An excellent variety for freezing.

Golden. 60 days. A gorgeous, brilliant golden zucchini producing abundantly on bush-habit plants. There are very few open-pollinated yellow summer squash, and this one is exceptional in appearance, productivity, and flavor. The fruits are evenly yellow, tender to about 8 inches in length, and have a slight curve at the neck. The plants seem to be quite resistant to powdery mildew. Developed at Rutgers and introduced in 1973.

Lebanese Light Green. 50–55 days. Ghostly light green in color with faint streaking, a bit wider at the blossom end, these dense and nutty-flavored zucchini will produce copiously until frost if kept picked. Compact plants lend themselves to small gardens. Fabulous grilled. Thin slices can be dried into chips with a surprisingly sweet flavor.

TOMATO/ORANGE-YELLOW *Solanum lycopersicum***50 seeds per packet**

Jaune de Chardonne. 80 days. Indeterminate. A Swiss landrace, not commercially grown, collected originally from a farmers’ market in Vevey. Lemon yellow and the size and shape of a plum, these juicy, sweet beauties are borne abundantly on heavy vines. In the early stages of ripeness Jaune can be used for drying.

Orange Banana. 79 days. Indeterminate. Perfectly and uniformly apricot-colored, these elongated 3-ounce plum tomatoes are very productive and adapted to a wide range of uses from drying to sauces to fresh eating. Unusually full and sweet flavor for a “paste” tomato. Smooth-skinned and crack-free.

Orange Queen. 92 days. Indeterminate. Round, baseball-sized, 12 to 15 ounces each, deep golden orange color, late-ripening, with a rich flavor and ability to hold very well even at the ripe stage on or off the plant.

Sweet Orange II. 55 days. Indeterminate. A round, crack-free, sweet-flavored, deep orange cherry tomato to rival Sungold in every regard. Huge yields on vigorous, disease-resistant vines. This is another introduction by Tim Peters of Peters Seed and Research. A family will need only one plant for a steady supply of bite-size tomatoes until frost.

Zolotoe Serdtse. 65–70 days. Determinate. Don’t ask me how to pronounce this. Translates from Russian as “heart of gold.” Oxheart-shaped, smooth, crack-free, plump 6-ounce fruits are uniformly clementine orange, have a great zingy sweet/tart flavor and a little point at the bottom. Ripens early on compact plants. From a seed saver in Belarus.

TOMATO/PINK-PURPLE *Solanum lycopersicum***50 seeds per packet**

Eva Purple Ball. *65 days.* Indeterminate. Really more pink than purple. A late 1800s heirloom from the Black Forest region of Germany. Perfectly smooth, blemish-free 5-ounce fruits have a luscious, sweet, juicy flavor.

Gezahnte Tomate Bühler-Keel. *80 days.* Indeterminate. Its name means “toothed tomato,” but I’d like to call it Concertina. Very deeply pleated so that slices are almost star-shaped. Pinkish in color, with a very thin skin and sweet mild flavor. Fruits are irregular in size and shape and are borne heavily on vigorous vines. Could be an Italian variety from the region near Naples.

Rose de Berne. *80 days.* Indeterminate. One of the best. An heirloom from Switzerland of outstanding quality. Round, somewhat flattened, very smooth, blemish- and crack-free, extremely productive, 6-ounce, pink, thin-skinned tomatoes of superior sweet and juicy flavor.

Togo Trefle. *70 days.* Indeterminate. A rare heirloom from Togo, West Africa. Small, flattened, ribbed, ½-ounce fruits. A heavy producer with excellent rich sweet/tart taste and some variation in size, shape, and color. Extremely hardy and very tolerant of drought and heat.

TOMATO/RED *Solanum lycopersicum***50 seeds per packet**

Amish Paste. *80 days.* Indeterminate. An heirloom from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Acorn- or heart-shaped with deep red color and intense tomatoey flavor. Meaty with few seeds, thick flesh, and 8 to 12-ounce fruits. Excellent for fresh eating or canning. A succulent choice—along with homegrown celery!—for the Italian bread and tomato salad *panzanella*.

Baselbieter Röteli. *70 days.* Indeterminate. From the Basel region of Switzerland. A small, blocky, 2-ounce plum tomato borne abundantly in large clusters. Very good taste, even in a year when the weather made it difficult to judge tomato flavor. Excellent for fresh eating, drying, or canning. Juicier and smaller than Royal Chico.

Burbank. *70 days.* Determinate. Medium-size, 3-ounce fruits, round, smooth, uniform, with good flavor and good drought resistance. Developed by Luther Burbank around 1915, with the highest total free amino acids of all tomatoes tested.

Ganti. *65 days.* Semi-determinate. A Hungarian heirloom. An excellent tomato with tart, full-bodied flavor. Bright red, round, uniform 4 to 5-ounce fruits. One of my favorites.

Kathleen’s Wild Sweet Cherry. *50 days.* Indeterminate. This tiny, intensely tart/sweet ¾-inch cherry tomato was given to me by a friend who gardens in a community garden in Brooklyn. The rangy vines are loaded with clusters of 7 fruits that show no signs of cracking even after torrential rains. Ripens over a long period for a continual harvest, and delivers more flavor than I’ve ever encountered in a cherry tomato. Extraordinarily resistant to late blight.

Kron-Prince. *70–75 days.* Indeterminate. The variety originated in India, but my seed came from a seed saver in Belarus. Very unusual tomato, borne in huge clusters of up to 20 3-ounce fruits, this amazingly productive, charming multi-purpose tomato is uniform in size, firm-fleshed, completely crack-free, heart-shaped with a pointed end. Juicy enough for fresh eating, but excellent for drying or a richly flavored sauce.

Küssnacht. *75 days.* Indeterminate. An heirloom from the town of Küssnacht on the Lake of Lucerne in central Switzerland. Somewhat squat, irregularly lobed fruits weigh 3 to 8 ounces, are intensely flavorful and a deep, even red.

Muchamiel. *75 days.* A meaty tomato originally from Alicante on the Mediterranean coast of southern Spain, where it is cultivated as a winter crop, giving it some tolerance to cool conditions. The flattened, heavily ribbed, 7 to 11-ounce fruits have a very fine flavor. From ProSpecieRara.

Old Fashioned Garden Peach. *80 days.* Semi-determinate. A so-called keeping tomato, which generally refers to a late-maturing, relatively thick-skinned, firm-fleshed tomato that holds well after picking. This is a globe-shaped, smooth-skinned, crack-free, 4-ounce tomato with better flavor than other keepers.

Pomodori di Sardegna. *70 days.* Indeterminate. A tiny, pear-shaped plum from Sardinia, growing in elongated clusters of up to 16 fruits. Rangy vines produce copious numbers of bright red, glossy, ½-ounce fruits over a long season. Like other cherries, it showed considerable resistance to late blight. Dried, these beauties make bite-size “chips.”

TOMATO/RED *(continued)***50 seeds per packet**

Royal Chico. *85 days.* Determinate. Compact and vigorous vines bear heavy yields of large plum tomatoes with firm, bright red, meaty flesh. Ideal for drying and one of the best for canning. This is a late-ripening tomato and it is possible, if frost threatens, to pull up entire plants, hang them upside down in the cellar, and allow the remaining tomatoes to ripen over time.

South American Banana. *90 days.* Indeterminate. This very large, 5 to 6-inch, elongated tomato resembles San Marzano, but is not quite as blocky. A stellar canning tomato, with outstanding flavor, thin skin, few seeds, and good yield if you can wait for it to ripen!

Thessaloniki. *80 days.* Indeterminate. Glecklers Seedsmen of Ohio introduced this Greek variety to the US in the 1950s. Firm, uniform, crack-free 6-ounce fruits with superior flavor. Perfectly globe-shaped, this productive mid-season tomato would make an excellent choice for markets.

TOMATO/OTHER COLORS *Solanum lycopersicum***50 seeds per packet**

Indian. *80 days.* Indeterminate. What some might call a “black” or “bronze” tomato, this one is actually two-tone: with a purply underside and green shoulders when ripe. The interior is deep bronze. A gorgeous tomato with a fine, tangy flavor, 8 to 10-ounce fruits, and a moderate yield.

Peppermint. *80 days.* Indeterminate. A bicolor yellow tomato with a stunning aurora borealis-like red flare on the bottom which bleeds into the interior. Fruits are up to 17 ounces. Praised for its meaty, sweet flesh.

White Delight. *80 days.* Indeterminate. Ivory white, 6 to 7-ounce fruits, tending toward lemon yellow on the shoulders. This is a somewhat flattened, faintly lobed variety with outstanding flavor and some variation in size and shape. My first seed came from Ruth Joly of Windsor Road Nursery in Claremont, New Hampshire, who has been growing it for many years. It was originally a commercial variety, perhaps sold under this name, but so far I have been unable to find any further historical information.

Yellow Out Red In. *99 days.* Semi-determinate. Another keeping tomato, this one providing fresh tomatoes into January if well stored. Uniform in size, crack-free, very productive late-ripening tomato with pale yellow skin and a peachy-pink interior. Pick just when beginning to turn in color, lay in flats, tuck into the root cellar, and allow to ripen over time.

WATERMELON *Citrullus lanatus***25 seeds per packet**

Golden Midget. *80 days.* Developed by famed New Hampshire plant breeder Elwyn Meader, and introduced in 1959, this diminutive, very early, perfectly round watermelon ripens to a golden yellow. The pink/red flesh is sweet and flavorful. Average weight is about 1½ pounds. An excellent choice where space is limited.

Orangeglo. *85–100 days.* Large, oblong fruits with light-green rind and dark, jagged markings produced on sturdy, wilt-resistant vines. The bright orange flesh is crisp, full of flavor and almost addictively sweet. In my garden, fruits reached about 17 pounds, but they can grow to 25. Makes a fabulous smoothie with homemade yogurt and fresh raspberries.

MISCELLANEOUS

Caraway. *Biennial.* Now that we are all making our own sauerkraut, we need caraway to flavor it, right? This aromatic and very hardy biennial will produce delicately flavored leaves in the first year, and seed in the second. Establish a bed in one corner of your garden. The plants will self-sow and offer a steady crop of seeds in subsequent years. Fantastic on roasted potatoes, or, of course, baked into rye bread. **100 seeds per packet.**

Cilantro Standby. *45 days.* This variety was bred by Tim Peters of Peters Seed and Research, a small seed company with over 20 years of careful breeding and preservation experience. Standby was developed for fall sowing and is extremely cold hardy and slow to bolt. The seeds of cilantro are, of course, coriander and, when freshly ground, are particularly aromatic. So this crop is a twofer. **65 seeds per packet.**

MISCELLANEOUS *(continued)*

Fennel selvatico. *Hardy perennial.* This is a non-bulbing fennel grown for its highly aromatic seed. Start indoors at the end of March, plant out in early May. Allow plenty of room since the plants reach impressive dimensions. The seeds will mature over a long season, so be prepared to harvest repeatedly. This is the classic fennel used to season Italian sausage. Each seed produces two seedlings. **100 seeds per packet.**

Nigella (Love in a Mist). The seed is used in Lebanese baking, and is also called “black cumin.” The flowers look like tiny versions of passion fruit flowers, ranging in color from very pale to deep blue on the same plant. The delicately perfumed seed is pure black and looks a little like onion seed. Allow the pods to dry on the plant, but be careful—they will readily spill their seed. **100 seeds per packet.**

Poppy Monticello. An annual breadseed poppy originally grown by Thomas Jefferson. The large, floppy flowers are a beautiful, deep salmon color with indigo blotches near the center. Best planted in the fall. Allow the seed pods to mature and dry on the stem, then shake out the seeds. Poppies readily self-sow. For seed saving plant only one variety a year to avoid crossing. **100 seeds per packet.**

BARLEY/HULLESS *Hordeum vulgare*

60 seeds per packet

Barley is an ancient food that now still ranks fourth in the world among cereal crops in terms of quantity grown and area devoted to cultivation. Its nutritional content and benefits are hard to overstate. It is easy to grow, easy to thresh, delicious and satisfying in its whole form. Plant as early in the season as possible—mid-April in our area—in moderately fertile soil, spacing seeds about 3 inches apart at a depth of 1 to 2 inches. Thresh by rubbing between your gloved hands, then winnow on a breezy day. Grains can be ground into flour for a dark, dense bread, cracked for a meaty hot breakfast cereal, or cooked whole for adding to soups or making into grain salads. Soak the grains several hours, then cook in ample water till tender.

Arabian Blue. *104 days.* An awned, 6-row variety with deep purple grains and an average of 48 grains per head. Very easily threshed.

Burbank. *90 days.* Golden brown grains arranged in 6 rows on awned heads. Relatively large grains, plant height is 41 inches. A very productive variety that is easy to thresh.

Faust. *80–100 days.* Awnless heads with an average of 45 grains each growing in 6 rows. The grains are a dark toasty gray-brown. Very easily threshed.

Naked. *85 days.* Blond grains on 2-row awned heads. Very productive and very easy to thresh.

Valsgerste. *96 days.* Originating in the town of Vals, canton Graubünden, Switzerland, this is a 6-row variety, with long awns and narrow, slender, elongated grains. Averaging 43 grains per head with a height of 36 inches. Very easily threshed.

OATS *Avena sativa*

100 seeds per packet

Oats are very easy to grow in the home garden. Plant as early as possible and harvest when the stems begin to turn golden. All three of these varieties proved especially easy to thresh. Hold a sheaf in one hand and smack the heads on the inside of a tall bucket. Then winnow on a sheet pan.

Mozart. *108 days.* 39 inches tall.

Nusso. *108 days.* An old Swiss variety. 3 feet tall.

Terra Hulless. *108 days.* High-yielding variety with large grains. 3 feet tall. Among the easiest to thresh.

RICE *Oryza sativa***50 seeds per packet**

After several years of trialing upland—or dry land—rice varieties, this is the only one that has consistently produced ripe seed.

Duborskian. *120 days.* A short grain, short season, hardy upland or paddy rice originally from Russia. This is a variety that has been grown successfully in various parts of New England. Seed should be soaked in water in early April till it sprouts, then transplanted to individual plugs. Wait till after all danger of frost, then plant in the warmest part of your garden, and keep well watered throughout the season. Harvest when seed fills out and turns firm and golden.

RYE *Secale cereale***100 seeds per packet**

Perennial Rye Mountaineer. Perennial grains offer many advantages. Because their roots extend deeper than those of annuals, they stabilize the soil, reduce erosion, reduce the need for fertilizer application, bring nutrients up to the surface, and, of course, provide a harvest over several years without requiring re-planting. Bred by Tim Peters, this rye variety produces slender, shatter-resistant heads, with delicate stalks almost 6 feet tall. Easily threshed. Good for poor soils. Plant in the fall for seed the following spring. Unlike most other grains, rye varieties will cross-pollinate, so for pure seed be sure to isolate from annual rye.

Val Peccia. *113 days.* This rye was found in the possession of two elderly sisters in Val Peccia, the highest side valley of the Maggia River in southern, Italian-speaking, Switzerland. At that elevation the rye grows to about 3 feet, however in a Vermont garden it will reach twice that height. Originally grown primarily for its straw, the long, slender stems were braided and wrapped around wheels of cheese. The cheeses were then stacked and bound together for shipment by mail into the lower valleys. The grain was also used for baking bread, and as our awareness increases of the nutritional value of rye breads, these older varieties deserve a closer look.

WINTER WHEAT *Triticum aestivum***100 seeds per packet**

Winter wheats tend to be more productive than spring wheats. Because they are planted in the fall, they save time in the spring when so much needs to be done in the garden. Ripening in mid-summer allows them to escape some of the disease pressures that afflict later-ripening spring wheats. Plus, their early emergence and dense foliage help keep weeds down. Superb flavor and baking qualities add to their desirable features. Plant winter wheats before September 15th, in moderately fertile, well-worked soil. Ideally, seeds should be sown about 8 to 12 inches apart in all directions, at a depth of about 1 to 2 inches. Closer spacing will mean less tillering and a slightly lower yield.

Maris Wigeon. Developed in 1964 by the Plant Breeding Institute in Cambridge, England, this semi-hard winter wheat has excellent bread-baking qualities. Good yield on awnless heads, strong straw with little tendency to lodge.

Sirvinta. A hard winter variety from Lithuania, introduced in 1989. I obtained my original seed from seed saver Will Bonsall. A beautiful, awnless, very productive variety with fat, easy-to-thresh golden heads on golden stems growing to 5 feet. The only winter wheat I've grown that does not lodge. Excellent cold tolerance. Despite only average protein content, Sirvinta has outstanding baking qualities.

Ukrainka. This hard winter wheat was developed in 1924 at the Mironovka Experimental Selection Station—now called the Mironovka Institute of Wheat Selection and Seed Production—110 km south of Kiev. Plants are 51 inches tall, heavily tillered, very productive. Plump grains are dark tan and ripen in mid-July. Excellent milling and bread-making qualities.

Vermont Read 1898. A soft white winter wheat, originally released in 1895 by G.A. Read of Charlotte, Vermont. A hybrid of Canadian heritage varieties Bearded Fife x Early Arcadian with plump, blond grains. Very productive, multi-tillered 49-inch plants with an unusually-shaped seed head that is slightly denser at the tip. Ripening in mid-July.

