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# QUAIL HILL COMMUNITY FARM

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Quail Hill Farm is a stewardship project of Peconic Land Trust

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## TOMATOES – 2024

Quail Hill Farm is growing 47 varieties of tomatoes – cherry, grape, paste and slicers in many shapes, sizes and colors: red, pink, orange, yellow, purple and green. Most of our favorite tomatoes are back. Only 9 varieties in this year's lineup are first timers; they indicated by an \*.

Coming from a dry climate, tomatoes require hot sunny days and warm nights in addition to good irrigation in order to ripen and develop their deep, rich flavor. Yet, too much rain can cause disease to set in. Thus far, the 2024 tomato crop looks to be a fine one. Situated across Block 4, our three successions of tomatoes include heirlooms, slicers, cherries, and a couple of early plantings of paste tomatoes!

Quail Hill is growing a strong mix of improved hybridized tomatoes as well as our favorite open-pollinated varieties. Open-pollinated tomatoes, unlike hybrids, reproduce seed true to type. Heirloom tomatoes are open-pollinated varieties developed before 1940. Hybrids are bred to withstand pest and disease pressure – myriad in QHF fields –and come with the added benefit of offering new sizes, shapes and colors. We also grow a mix of "determinate" (early-maturing and short-statured) and "indeterminate" (taller, with a longer harvest window) tomatoes. This season's varieties were selected to fruit across a broad range of weather conditions and promise an extended, ample harvest.

Come to the 17th **Great Tomato Taste-Off on Saturday, August 31** and try them all. Or at least all that can be found. There are always varieties that are MIA/missing – or, perhaps, not yet ready, like some paste tomatoes that grow better in the cooler September weather.



**CHERRY/GRAPE:** From the mountainous region of NW Italy, the richly flavored, five-sided fruits of **Aosta Valley** are excellent fresh, stewed or added to sauce. **Black Cherry** has the complex, juicy flavor of the best black tomatoes. The 3-4 oz. fruit of **Black Zebra** \* have a green striped, dark red exterior with a deep, complex flavor. The 1" purplish-red **Chocolate Cherry** \* has port wine-colored flesh and a delectable taste. **Indigo Cherry Drops** are deep, rosy-red with a black-purple cast that bursts with sweet flavor. The shiny, deep red grape **Juliet** grows in clusters of 12-18 fruits with a delicious, rich flavor—good for salads, salsa, and sauce. Red and small, **Matt's Wild Cherry** is an early ripener, packed with sweet full flavor. **Pink Bumble** \* fruits are streaked with gold and packed with sweetness. **Pocket Star** \* has little flecks of gold around its crown and a good acid/sweet balance; when ready for harvest, a slight golden yellow appears at its base. Native to Central and South America, the tender and nearly seedless grape **Red Pearl** has good flavor, a meaty texture and is high in anti-oxidants. The early ripening **Sun Gold** is bright tangerine orange and its sweet flavor has a hint of acid tartness. **Super Sweet 100** produces clusters of red 1" fruits that are round and sweet. The pale yellow, 1¼" **White Cherry** fruits early and has a good mild taste.

**PASTE:** The round, 2½" fruit of **Bellstar** ripens early and has a smooth fleshy interior; it's as good for fresh eating as it is for sauce. An Italian heirloom, the 6-8 oz. **Hogheart** \* can be either heart-shaped or banana pepper-shaped. Large, elongated and pink, the 3-6" **Mr. Fumarole** has a rich, complex, flavor that is both tart and sweet. An heirloom originally from Poland, the 5" long **Opalka** (aka the Polish Torpedo) is shaped like a banana pepper with a pronounced tip on the bottom; its meaty fruit has few seeds and is loaded with rich sweet flavor. Red with yellow and orange iridescent streaks down its side, the gorgeous **Speckled Roman** produces meaty fruit and makes great sauce. The of 4-6 oz. squat Roma-shaped fruits of the orange **Sunrise Sauce** has a sweet flavor and makes a tasty sauce. The deep red "cocktail plum" **Verona**\* is a larger, plumper, even tastier version of the perennial favorite Juliet; the 2½ oz. fruits grow in long clusters. With its nipped end, the 2 oz. blood red fruit of **Vilms** can be plum or pear shaped and makes a flavorful sauce.

OVER

## STANDARD TOMATOES:

### RED

For an early hybrid tomato, the French round slicer **Carmello** is impressive for its generous 10-12 oz. fruit and well-developed flavor with a good sugar/acid balance. The real **Cosmonaut Volkov**, who died in a landing accident, is honored by this Russian favorite with its round, slightly flattened fruits and full flavor, nicely balanced between acid and sweet. A 6-8 oz. slicer, **Defiant** has smooth globe-shaped fruit that are medium-firm with good texture. Bred in the Mediterranean region, the delicious **Estiva** is a slicer known for its uncanny ability to set fruit in excessive heat and produces fully loaded trusses of deep red fruit over a long season. An early ripener, the potato leafed **Glacier** has 1-3 oz. globe-shaped fruit that are tasty and sweet. A reliable slicer, the 8 oz. **Jet Star** has a firm, meaty texture, a sweet flavor and is low in acidity. Released in 1956 by Campbell's tomato breeders and the standard flavor for its soup, the round 9 oz. **KC 146** has a rich flavor and is great for canning. The early **Moskvich** hails from eastern Siberia and has deep red skin and rich flavor. An early cluster tomato, **Premio** produces perfectly round 4 oz. fruit that are firm, but juicy, with nice texture, sweetness and flavor. **Rutgers** is as terrific for canning as for slicing; the 8-oz. fruits have a rich red interior and a great old-time flavor.

### PINK

The color of port wine with metallic green stripes, the bi-lobed **Berkeley Pink Tie-Dye** averages 9 oz. and has an engaging tanginess, as if lightly salted. Meaty with just the perfect hint of tartness, **Pink Brandywine** produces fruit up to 1½ lb., well worth waiting for as they often prefer the cooler early fall to August's heat. With smooth translucent pink skin, the perfectly round, medium-sized **Rose de Berne** has both robust flavor and rich sweetness. passed down amongst Mennonite groups in Wisconsin. Also from Wisconsin, the large beefsteak fruit of the potato leafed **Tiffen Mennonite** \* have prominent ribs and a rich sweet flavor.

### ORANGE / YELLOW

Juicy and very sweet, the French heirloom **Garden Peach** has small, fuzzy skinned 2 oz. fruits that blush pink when ripe. The bright, golden-orange fruits of **Golden Jubilee** \* average 6- 7 oz. and have meaty, thick walls with few seeds; great for making tomato juice. The flattened-round, 7-8 oz. beefsteak fruits of **Lemon Boy** have a sweet tangy flavor; ready when bright lemon-yellow, they turn a deeper golden-yellow, exhibiting light checking and a subtle blush at the blossom scar. The 10-15 oz. **Mountain Spirit** \* is a yellow-red bi-color with low acidity and gentle fruitiness. Cut in half, the beautiful **Pineapple** looks like its namesake except with yellow and red marbling; it has a mild-low-acid fruity sweetness and is delicious roasted with olive oil, garlic and rosemary. The yellow-red **Striped German** has ribbed shoulders and a red and yellow interior with complex, fruity flavor. The large, bright orange **Valencia** has a meaty interior with few seeds and weighs 8-10 oz.

### PURPLE

A Russian variety, the 5-7 oz. globe-shaped **Black Prince** is an iridescent garnet and has outstanding flavor. The fruits of **Cherokee Purple**, originally cultivated by the Cherokee people and thought to be more than 100 years old, have a dusky pink skin and wonderfully sweet, purplish-pinkish-brownish flesh. With shadows of crimson, green and brown, the large flattened heirloom beefsteak **Weaver's Black Brandywine** pairs the intense smoky depth of "black" tomatoes with the full tart and sweet balance of Pink Brandywine.

### GREEN

Its green flesh marbled with pink, the big (up to 1 pound), **Aunt Ruby's German Green** produces a sweet yet tart fruit that blushes lightly yellow and, when ripe, develops an amber pink tinge on the blossom end; pick them before they get too soft. **Green Zebra** with its various shades of yellow-green stripes has a sweet zingy flavor.



**THE GREAT TOMATO TASTE-Off** is a unique opportunity to sample all 47 tomato varieties grown at Quail Hill Farm and to vote for your favorites. Ratings are based on taste and texture: from 1 = terrible to 5 = terrific.

\* = first time grown at Quail Hill.