



Tomato  
'Cherokee Purple'

**Tomato Idol could be an alternative name** for Tomatomania---our huge tomato "blind taste test" event, held every September. Attendees taste as many of our 120 tomato varieties as they care to, and then they vote on their favorites. The following year, we base our tomato plant production on the results of the Tomatomania Popularity Poll. Customer opinions really count! This year Tomatomania is set for Saturday, September 10.

In spring we offer over 90

kinds of tomatoes every day. During our new "Vintage Veggie" event we'll have about 20 additional tomato varieties that will be available for a limited time---May 12-22. So this is a great time to see our largest selection of tomato plants. These new tomato varieties will be part of the 2011 Tomatomania taste test. "Vintage Veggies" is our one time offering of over 80 interesting vegetables, this year including about twenty tomatoes, eight peppers, fourteen squash, five cucumbers, four eggplants, and more. The Vintage Veggie plants are all heirloom or hybrid gourmet varieties. We search far and wide for "new" plants to try---seed companies from around the world and individual rare seed collectors! Try something new this year!



Tomato 'Golden Ponderosa'



Speaking of cucumbers, about eight weeks ago I planted some seeds of a variety called 'Tasty Green', a new variety I am trialing. After they sprouted, I transplanted about six of them into a ten gallon pot. I fitted the pot with a large tomato cage of heavy gauge metal---the whole thing is about six feet tall. The plants have

thrived in the tropical heat of our greenhouse, and I am going to pick my first cukes this week. There are about one hundred cukes on the plants right now. I don't know if they will all make it to maturity, but all signs look favorable for now. Last year I grew the round, yellow 'Lemon' cuke with similar results---this year we are offering 'Lemon' at our Vintage Veggies event.



I like growing cukes in pots. You can get a lot of production per square foot, and the fruit is very easy to access. Best of all I like the plant activity up where I can appreciate it's many interesting features. The huge, tropical leaves, the coiling tendrils, the male and female flowers colored a clear, beautiful greenish yellow, and of course the cucumbers as they grow. Remember to pick them before they become too large---check the label for the ideal picking size. If they get too big, the stem end will be bitter. You know that familiar saying "the bitter end?" It originated with cucumbers. One last cucumber note--- Cukes are tropical---they originated in India. Plant them outdoors only after night time temperatures are above 50 degrees, just like tomatoes and peppers.



Try a new cuke, or a new tomato, or a new something. There is a huge and fascinating world of plants waiting to be discovered.

