

# ***Paste Tomatoes—Searching for More Flavor***



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**Last year I planted a few different paste tomatoes** in our trial garden, so I could compare their flavor. I was disappointed in the results. Most of them could be described as flavorless. I tried them all many times and the findings were always the same—blah. Searching the web, I found several sites that did a comparison of paste tomatoes, and rated the winners. Now we're growing a number of new paste tomatoes based on those findings. We'll have extra plants available during Vintage Veggie week in mid May, if you'd like to try some.

*photo courtesy of tomatofest.com*



**Russian Big Roma**

*photo courtesy of seedsavers.org*



**Hungarian Heart**

Many gardeners who grow paste, or sauce, tomatoes intend on making sauce. The ultimate flavor of the sauce is determined by the many spices that are added when making it. As far as the tomato itself is concerned, what is needed is a nearly seedless, meaty tomato, and plenty of them. The tomato is merely the base to which all the other ingredients (herbs, spices) are added. (Perhaps it's the spices that bring out the flavor of the tomato, like salt does for so many foods.) So, the flavor of the tomato may not be a major concern for making sauce. But it is to me, because I don't make any sauce. I just like growing different kinds of tomatoes. Sometimes I want a tomato that is meaty, not too juicy. So I grow a couple of paste types. I serve them fresh, adding a little pepper and salt, and usually some basil leaves and of course olive oil. So the search for a more tasty paste tomato is on.

*photo courtesy of ivygarth.com*



**Sausage**

*photo courtesy of seedsavers.org*



**Salvaterra's Select**

I remember my mom canning tomatoes when I was a kid. She never made sauce to freeze or can, just canned tomatoes. In the winter she used the canned tomatoes to make her delicious spaghetti sauce, the favorite meal for us kids. This was before sauces like Ragu and the like were available. I remember those canning days well, because it always seemed to start on the hottest day of the

summer. Our little kitchen was poorly ventilated and after a long day with several burners going, the heat was intense. And my mom did it without any help. I was too young, and when I was a little older my brother and I would be clowning around too much to be of any help. Years later I asked her what kind of tomatoes she used for canning and she said whatever was available. If our garden came up short, she would buy them by the bushel from one of the many roadside stands that there were back then.

*photo courtesy of ivygarth.com*



**Viva Italia**



**Oxheart Pink**

For this year's Vintage Veggie program (starting May 13), we'll be offering at least five new paste tomatoes for you to evaluate. They are 'Russian Big Roma,' 'Hungarian Heart,' 'Sausage,' 'Salvaterra's Select,' and 'Viva Italia.' Another is 'Oxheart Pink,' though not technically a paste type, it has very dense flesh and few seeds. I'm most looking forward to "Salvaterra's Select" and 'Sausage.' Both are noted for their intense, tomatoey flavor. We hope you'll try some of these and let us know what you think. **[Here is our complete VV list for 2021.](#)** Along with the paste tomatoes we're offering about eighteen other tomatoes. I'm anxious to try 'Box Car Willie,' a classic heirloom of the famous "New Jersey" type. 'Brimmer Pink' is another

that appeals to me, a sweet pink beefsteak that originated over 100 years ago. Those of you who like cherry tomatoes probably know of one called 'Sweet Baby Girl.' We've been offering it for at least fifteen years, but now the seed is no longer available. So we're trying a few new cherry types to see if we can find something as good or better. If 'Sweet Baby Girl' had a fault, it was that it split too easily. I'm looking to try 'Princess Yum Yum,' an extra sweet cherry that's disease resistant. We're also always looking for varieties that do well in containers. So many folks like growing in pots these days, including me. Usually that means a "bush," or determinate type that stays shorter. 'Simplicity' looks interesting to me, a beefsteak type that will probably be less than 48" tall and bears earlier than most beefsteaks.

*photo courtesy of totallytomato.com*



**Box Car Willie**



**Simplicity**

The Vintage Veggie program features over sixty varieties of vegetables. Tomatoes are the biggest category, followed by peppers, cucumbers, squash, and others. Check the list and see what's coming. We'll be talking about them in future blogs.

Please email me ([kevin@milaegers.com](mailto:kevin@milaegers.com)) with your questions and comments!

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