



PACIFIC COAST  
FARMERS' MARKET  
ASSOCIATION

## HARVEST HEADLINE - HEIRLOOM TOMATOES



For those who appreciate a tomato's simplest, most delicious form, the arrival of summer's exquisite heirloom [tomatoes](#) is a yearly delight. They are being harvested now and you can look forward to the wonderful colors, shapes, sizes, and flavors of these beauties arriving at your farmers' market soon.

Local farmers have told us that heirloom tomatoes are scheduled to arrive right on time this year. The rain we had this last winter was a boon to production and growth, leaving farmers to begin picking a bountiful crop.

Richard Swank of [Swank Family Farms](#), based in Hollister, stated, "We have a heavier crop than usual because of the rain we've had for the last two winters. Look for a good quantity to arrive by the middle of July."

Ron Borba of [Borba Family Farms](#), an organic farm in Aromas also says the tomato crop "looks real good this year. We should have many different types of heirloom tomatoes this summer. We should deliver them to the farmers' markets around the first or second week in July."

What is an heirloom tomato exactly? An heirloom is generally considered to be a variety passed down through several generations because of its valued characteristics such as flavor, growth habits, and ease of production. They are "open-pollinated" tomatoes as opposed to today's hybrids. Types with long histories include Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, Green Zebra, Jubilee, and German Green. Each variety is truly unique, with sometimes contorted, fun shapes and gorgeous colors, and ranging in size from tiny heirloom cherry tomatoes to gigantic Cherokee Purples.

Heirloom tomatoes do not usually travel well because of their thin skins. They also have a shorter shelf life than conventional tomatoes, thus they are ideally suited for local farmers to grow because they can be quickly brought to market once they are ripe.

You'll find only the best and most flavorful heirloom tomatoes at your local farmers' market. There will be so many varieties and so many gorgeous colors from which to choose! Make a Caprese Salad with big slabs of Brandywines, tomato pie with German Greens, or try our [Oven Sundried Tomatoes](#) made with colorful heirloom cherry tomatoes.

TAGS