

## Tomatoes for Colorado

By Patty Karrels, Tagawa Gardens

Colorado gardeners continually search for tasty, hardy tomato varieties that produce well in our unique environment. Fortunately, choices for the Colorado home gardener have never been greater. These guidelines may help you choose:

- **Heirloom tomatoes** have outstanding flavor, but little or no disease resistance. **Hybrid tomatoes** have great flavor and resistance to common tomato diseases.
- **GMO** tomatoes have genes modified using genetic engineering. Currently no GMO tomato plants are available commercially in the US.
- Due to our cool nights and short growing season, most Denver area gardeners are successful with early and mid-season tomato varieties that mature in 45 to 75 days.

Certain tomato varieties are popular because they grow and produce well year after year. 'Early Girl', 'Fourth of July', and 'Stupice' are early season favorites, while 'Celebrity', 'Ace', and 'Champion' are favorite mid-season choices. In the cherry tomato category, 'Sun Gold' and 'Super Sweet 100's' are large plants that produce huge numbers of incredibly sweet fruit all summer long.



For cooking, 'San Marzano Redorta' and 'Juliet' get high marks for tomato paste and sauces. In the large slicing tomato category the heirloom 'Brandywine' is considered the gold standard for outstanding taste. However, a newcomer called 'Pruden's Purple', which boasts the same great taste but matures earlier, is challenging 'Brandywine'.

With plenty of choices to cater to your specific needs and tastes, there has never been a better time to

grow delicious tomatoes in your Colorado garden.