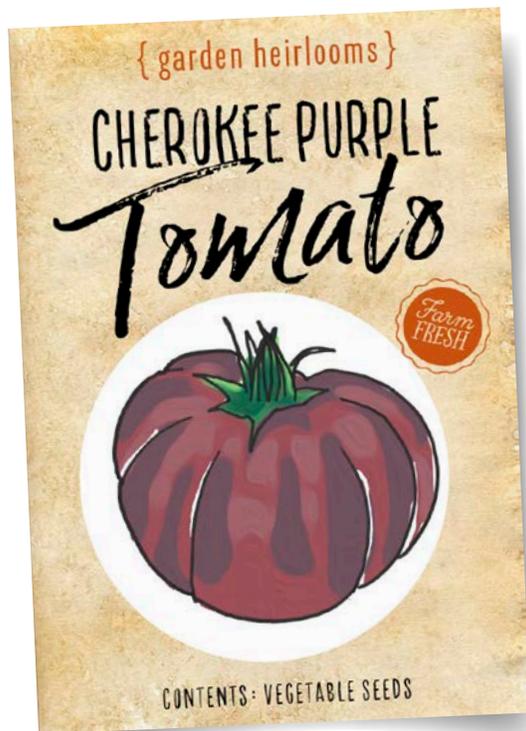


# Savor the Harvest

When seed catalogs arrive, I love choosing vegetables to grow. Typically, I select heirloom varieties that have been passed down through generations. I love the stories behind the seeds, and the veggies are more unique and flavorful. Here are five of my favorites, available from *rareseeds.com*.

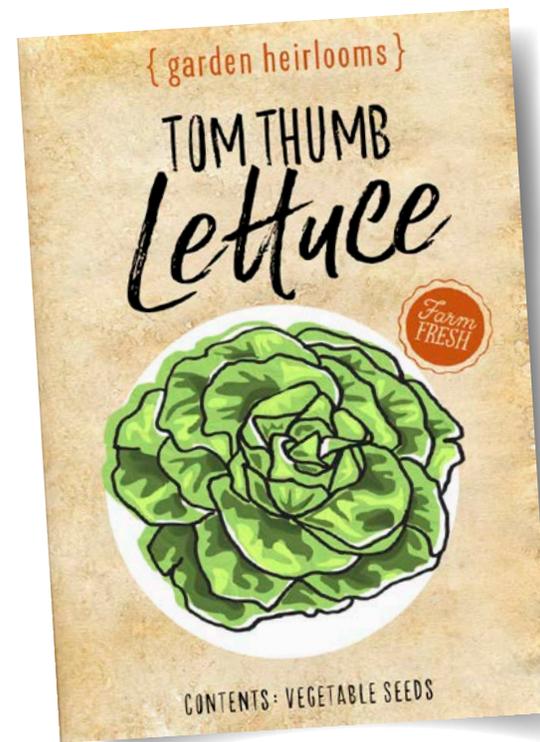
BY LORI VANOVER SENIOR EDITOR



## ◀ CHEROKEE PURPLE TOMATO

This tomato drew me in with its promise of deep purple-pink fruit. I was pleased to find the sweet, rich flavor matched its beauty. It's no surprise this variety frequently wins taste tests. The old Cherokee heirloom can be traced back to before 1890. It's a prolific producer of very large tomatoes—perfect for slicing to serve on hearty sandwiches and in salads.

*Determinate (bush) tomato plants are smaller than indeterminate ones, making them better suited for planting in containers.*



## ◀ TOM THUMB LETTUCE

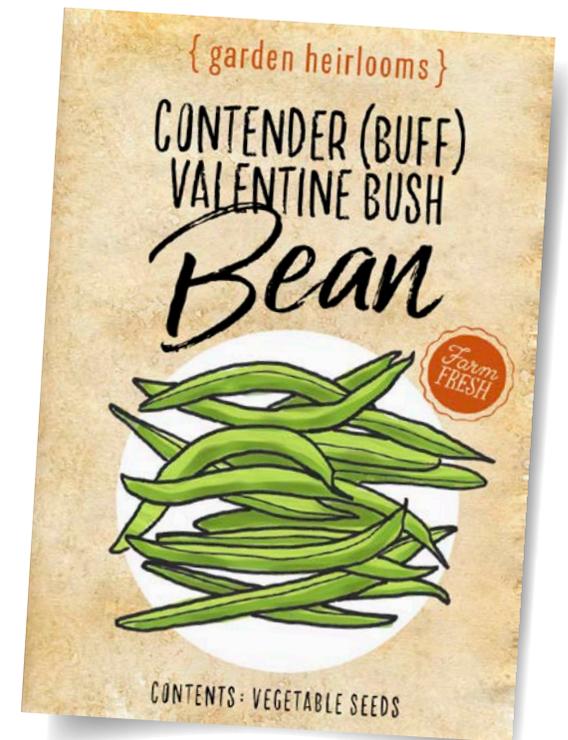
Lettuce is easy to grow, but there's nothing more disappointing than when it turns bitter. In the Midwest, summer temperatures jump up and down, so a heat-tolerant variety is best. This heirloom dates to the 1850s and produces small round heads. The bright yellowish green leaves have a mild buttery flavor and resist bolting, allowing you to harvest longer.

*To harvest lettuce, cut off individual leaves or pick the entire head.*

## ▶ CONTENDER (BUFF) VALENTINE BUSH BEAN

My garden space is small, so I look for compact bush plants that produce a mess of beans. This 1949 heirloom reliably and quickly rewards me with plenty of tender green pods. The crop matures over a short period of time, making it ideal for canning or freezing.

*Sow bean seeds directly into the garden when soil is above 60 degrees.*

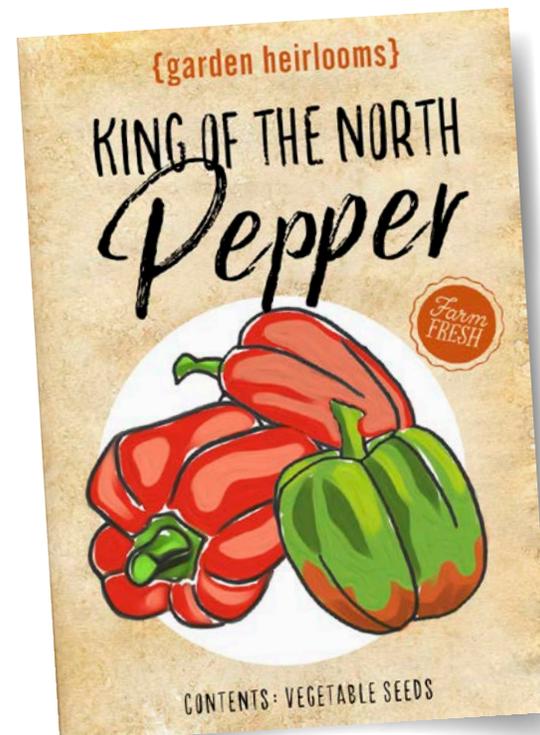
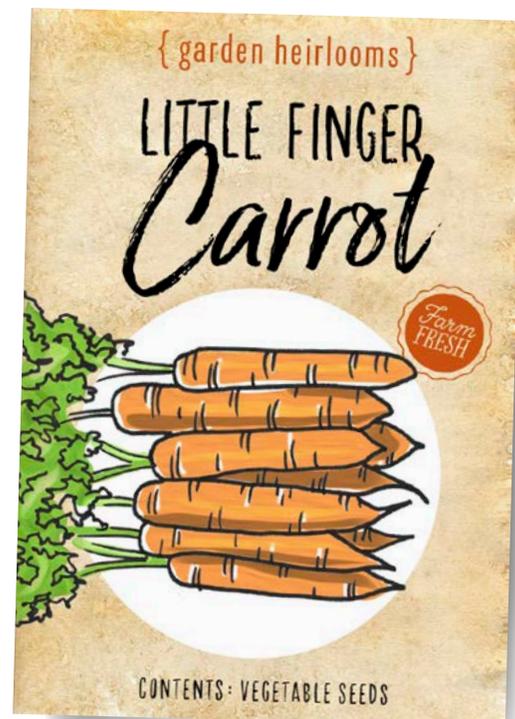


## ▶ LITTLE FINGER CARROT

Yes, you can grow baby carrots! These dainty darlings were developed in France for canning and pickling. The sweet, deep orange, 4-inch carrots also make a delicious and healthy snack. My 2-year-old likes to pull them right up out of the soil and start nibbling as soon as I rinse them off with the hose.

Little Fingers' miniature size makes them a good choice to grow in containers or raised beds.

*Carrots require a light and loose soil. In compact ground, try growing round or short varieties.*



## ◀ KING OF THE NORTH PEPPER

Introduced in 1934, this heirloom bell pepper is delightfully versatile. The large peppers mature early, turning from green to red as they ripen, so the plant is well-suited to northern regions like mine with shorter growing seasons. With thick, sweet-tasting flesh, it's a great stuffing pepper and a delicious addition to salsa.

*Start pepper seeds indoors eight to 10 weeks before last frost date. A heat mat helps speed germination.*

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