

## Did You Know?

# Heirloom Varieties

## What is an Heirloom?

Before the industrialization of agriculture, a much wider variety of plant foods were grown for human consumption. Many of these older varieties we call heirlooms because they have been passed down within the family, just like pieces of heirloom jewelry or furniture.

The use of the term "heirloom" is first attributed to Professor William Hepler at the University of New Hampshire, who used the term in the 1940's to describe some local beans he was given.



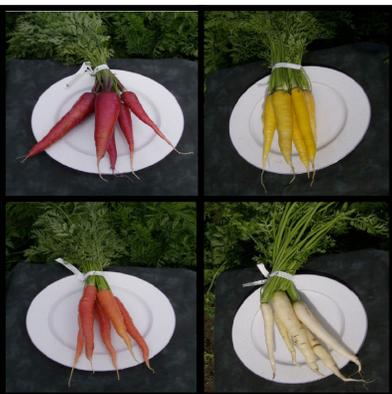
Organic Heirloom Tomatoes on display at the farmers market stall of Garden Back to Eden Organics.

**Though heirloom tomatoes are a popular heirloom choice at the market, Discovery also carries heirloom carrots, turnips, apples, beets, romanesco, grapefruit, collards and other greens, eggplant, garlic, and peppers!**

## Why Heirlooms?

Since each variety has developed over generations, and is open pollinated, heirloom varieties adapt to the climate and growing conditions, developing distinct strengths and tolerances to such things as soil conditions and pests. While commercial seeds are bred to provide uniformity, for example carrots that are always orange, heirloom seeds preserve biodiversity.

Garry Lowe from Twin Meadows Organics, says "Commercial seed companies sell less than 10% of the seed varieties that have been around for years. Hybrid seed is not an unhealthy seed, but one that locks the farmer into buying seed each year from a seed company, as hybrids cannot be reliably propagated by the farmer." Heirloom varieties are held up as symbols of food sovereignty for farmers and the general public because a person can save seeds from one year's crop, and plant the next year, independent of any seed company.



Pictured above are just four of the heirloom carrot varieties grown by Twin Meadows Organics Farm in McBride BC

### More Info

[www.westcoastseeds.com](http://www.westcoastseeds.com)

[www.seeds.ca](http://www.seeds.ca)

[www.twinmeadowsorganics.com](http://www.twinmeadowsorganics.com)

[www.gbeorganic.com](http://www.gbeorganic.com)