

Happy *almost* spring,

I'm always so excited to send out the Garden Dreams heirloom tomato & specialty plant starts catalog for the coming season. This year we're offering ninety-five (95) tomatoes. You can see what I'm reaching for... the Pittsburgh 100. We'll hit that goal next year!

I say "we" because Garden Dreams has a new full-time employee this season – Robert Madden who some of you may know from the East End Food Co-op. Bob is eager for the season to kick into high gear and I'm eager for a great year with him at the helm.

We're making an improvement this season by expanding the seedling pick-up window. Plants will be available for pick-up at Garden Dreams from 9 am to 7 pm daily during Friday May 2<sup>nd</sup> through Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>. Give Bob ([maddenrobert@yahoo.com](mailto:maddenrobert@yahoo.com)) or me at least one week's notice prior to arriving so we can be sure to have your order pulled and ready for you.

Seedlings will also be available, as in the past, at the East End Food Co-op (EEFC) ([www.eastendfoodcoop.com](http://www.eastendfoodcoop.com)) and at Gardenalia, 252 S. Highland Avenue in Shadyside, plus two new locations this year including McGinnis Sisters in Monroeville and Construction Junction ([www.constructionjunction.org](http://www.constructionjunction.org)) in North Point Breeze. As always, we'll be at May Market (<http://www.phipps.conservatory.org/exhibits.htm>) sharing our booth with Grow Pittsburgh ([www.growpittsburgh.org](http://www.growpittsburgh.org)).

We'll also be hosting our annual Memorial Day Plant Sale at Garden Dreams with other local growers including Sylvania Natives ([www.sylvanianatives.com](http://www.sylvanianatives.com)) and Blackberry Meadows ([www.blackberrymeadows.com](http://www.blackberrymeadows.com)). Sylvania Natives is Western Pennsylvania's only privately owned nursery exclusively growing and selling quality plants native to the region. Blackberry Meadows is a local certified organic farm and sells at farmer's markets, the EEFC and through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares.

As it seems to be the case every year when I write, I'm working on some big new plans and even bigger visions. Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery is evolving into Hamnett Homestead Sustainable Living Center and if all goes as planned, students from Carnegie Mellon University will begin the Center's design phase this summer.

Greg Boulos of Urban Homesteaders, LLC ([www.urbanhomesteaders.com](http://www.urbanhomesteaders.com)) and I are working on this project together and we couldn't be more excited. Our vision is to create a demonstration and education center that empowers urban dwellers to achieve a more sustainable lifestyle. The Center will model green renovation methods, urban food production, energy conservation and alternative energy options, waste minimization and sustainable lifestyle options. We'll engage participants through tours, classes, special events... and more! Can you tell we're pumped?

This project is happening within a larger effort to revitalize the entire neighborhood (Hamnett Place). In 2007, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation began significant development efforts in Wilkinsburg and in particular Hamnett Place. They

have redone four single family homes and all have sold. The first to sell was the one right across the street from my farm on Holland Avenue and yes... Jack and Erin came to buy heirloom tomatoes last spring, saw the house under construction and made an offer within weeks. They'll join Bob, Betty (my partner) and I in the garden this summer, but even better, Jack and Erin have their eye on a vacant house next door and lot behind them to build an urban oasis of their own. Their place will be urban homestead number two.

Jack, Erin, Greg and I have identified two other properties with great urban homesteading potential on Holland Avenue. If Green Acres is the place for you and you dream of being an urban homesteader, then certainly give me a call.

Another project in the works is the acquisition of Jane Holmes Residence and Gardens on Swissvale Avenue. My friend Kim Miller and I are working to transform this 58,000 square foot 125 year old architectural gem on 4.4 beautiful acres into the Jane Holmes Urban Eco Center. We don't own the property... YET, but in essence we want to create a community center and campus of like-minded green focused organizations. If we're successful pulling this project together, Jane Holmes will serve as the "anchor" for the grand vision of The Wilkesburg Urban Ecovillage.

This is all very exciting stuff and I'm happy to be able to share it all with you. But back to the important matter at hand... Tomatoes! Enjoy reading this year's offerings. Many requested old favorites are back including Principe Borghese, Stupice, Thessaloniki, Peron, Tappy's Heritage, Striped German, Hillbilly and Black Prince.

You may notice in the catalog that as time goes on, I've been able to find more open pollinated strains as well as more organic seeds. You can see pictures on the company websites where I get my seeds (listed below). Also, it may not be obvious, but all of the tomatoes are organized by size from largest to smallest within each color category.

Please be sure to send in your order form along with your check made payable to Garden Dreams to ensure you get the varieties you want. Orders are filled as received and some varieties are extremely limited. Thanks for your continued business and here's to a great 2008 garden season!

Best regards,

Mindy Schwartz  
Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery  
404 Center Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221  
412-638-3333, [mindyjoyschwartz@comcast.net](mailto:mindyjoyschwartz@comcast.net)

PS – Please share the 2008 catalog with friends and family.

Seed sources with good pictures: [www.tomatofest.com](http://www.tomatofest.com), [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com),  
[www.seedsofchange.com](http://www.seedsofchange.com), [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com), [www.tomatogrowers.com](http://www.tomatogrowers.com)