



World's Most Expensive Tomato

'Marianna's Peace' is most likely the world's most expensive tomato. At least, at \$24 for six seeds, it belongs near the top. Overall, its essence is exceptionally rich, with good sweet-acid balance and luscious, complex flavors evocative of handpicked tomato flavors. In taste trials with chefs in 1999, 'Marianna's Peace' was judged the "best tasting" tomato.

This exotic tomato has an equally intriguing history. Marianna's family was made up of farmers from Bohemia, Czechoslovakia. During World War II, the Russians came to her school and loaded the 17-year-old Marianna and all her schoolmates into a truck bound for Siberia. During the journey, Marianna and a few others escaped by jumping from the moving truck. As she crossed the Czech border she was shot in the leg, but with the help of her friends she was able to continue on to the town of Weiden in Bavaria. She lost all contact with her family for the next 10 years, but after years of diligent searching and the aid of the Red Cross, she found them in 1955. The name 'Marianna's Peace' and some tomato seeds were gifts from her father before he died. She married, and in 1957 she moved to Washington with her husband where they raised four children.



The family wasn't able to provide any history of the tomato's breeding or origin, only that the seeds from this heirloom reached back to the early 1900s and, year after year, the tomatoes borne from these seeds were treasured for their outstanding taste and beauty. 'Marianna's Peace' is a late-

season, indeterminate, potato-leaf variety (it germinates in 80 to 85 days) that produces 1- to 2-pound pink-red, beefsteak-styled fruit. Seeds are available on a very limited basis from Gary Ibsen at www.tomatofest.com.

