

Virtual Hortlania 2020

Our Little Farm Nursery

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<https://m.facebook.com/OurLittleFarmAndNursery>

This week, Joanne Fuller interviewed Lisa Goldbeck from Our Little Farm and Nursery and edited their conversation for this article.

Lisa, tell me about the plants you grow?

We grow tons of different kinds of vegetables plus herbs, annuals and some perennials. I love our tomatoes. The most important thing for me in a tomato is rich flavor, so all of my favorites have good flavor. I particularly like the ones that ripen green. A really good one is 'Green Zebra', also 'Green Cherokee' and 'Aunt Ruby's German Green'. Some are blushed yellow outside, and when you cut them open they have these beautiful golden centers surrounded by bright green flesh. I grow twenty varieties of black tomatoes. Some of the best are 'Carbon', 'Ananas Noir' and 'Cherokee Carbon'. The black cherry tomatoes include 'Black Cherry' and 'Chocolate Cherry'. The black tomatoes make really rich sauces with beautiful dark color. And of course, we grow red tomatoes.

How did you get started?

Growing up, I worked with my family at our nursery-- Country Garden Nursery. We grew a lot of perennials and did a lot of weddings. I gravitated to the vegetable production. In 1996, I went out on my own. I started by growing just a few varieties of tomatoes. I just kept trying new things and adding varieties to please my customers. It was so cool when I grew my first black tomato. Today, we grow 200 varieties of tomatoes including twenty varieties of black tomatoes.

Can you give me some tips for growing tomatoes?

You probably know this, but gardeners need to pay attention to determinate vs. indeterminate when buying tomatoes. If you want to grow plants on smaller supports, buy determinate plants. This also allows you to harvest all at once and then go on vacation. If you want to harvest all summer long choose an indeterminate tomato.

When I plant tomatoes, I take off the bottom set of leaves and plant them deeply. I pinch off any flowers on the plant as I plant it-- this will stimulate flower production. I water deeply then back off the watering. This causes the roots to grow deeper seeking water which will create stronger healthier plants. You can use the same pinching off and watering strategy with peppers to create strong productive plants.

Do you fertilize your plants?

I use a well-balanced basic fertilizer following the amounts listed in the instructions. Sometimes, people think that more is better with fertilizer, but more fertilizer will just burn plants, or they will get lots of leaves and less flowers. I also like fish fertilizer-- your soil smells for a couple of days, but it is worth it.

What about tomato skins splitting?

Splitting tomato skin is a sign of too much water. Tough skins are a sign of not enough water.

You grow other vegetables too?

We grow many varieties of peppers. All summer long, we roast our peppers and add them to whatever meal we are eating. For roasting, I like 'Sweet Banana' and 'Hot Banana'. For making hot sauce, you can use 'Habanero' peppers, but if you want really hot ones use something like 'Carolina Reaper', 'Devil's Tongue' or 'Satan's Kiss'. I grow and sell the 'Pineapple' Tomatillo. It is so different from a regular tomatillo-- it is sweet and great for a sweet, hot salsa. We grow a dozen varieties of summer squash, a dozen kinds of winter squash, fifteen different varieties of cucumber, herbs, snap peas, onions, cabbage and kale. We grow a pink celery called 'Peppermint'. We grow a red Brussel sprout called 'Red Bull' and a yellow one called 'Hestia'. I grow a beautiful French pumpkin named 'Galeux d'Eysines' which is pink with orange flesh and is so sweet you can eat it raw or roast it like a squash. We have a huge selection of vegetables ready to be planted now.

Flowers too?

We are selling our perennials at half price right now because we grew many of them to sell at Hortlandia. We have hanging baskets and many annuals.

How do customers buy plants from you right now?

We don't sell online, so you have to visit us. We are open Monday - Saturday 9 am - 6 pm at the farm. We are at the Orenco Farmers Market at Orenco Station on Sundays 10 am - 2 pm now thru November. Shopping at the farm is low key. There is plenty of space, and people are being very respectful. There are four different shopping areas for customers to spread out. If customers are nervous about shopping, they can call me, Lisa Goldbeck at 971-645-9515 to place an order for pick up at the farm or to shop before opening hours. Up to date information is available on our Facebook page <https://m.facebook.com/OurLittleFarmAndNursery>.