

# 5 tomato superstars for a mouthwatering harvest

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Tomato time is my favorite time. In spring, the anticipation of slicing into a juicy, meaty ball of perfection has me planting more than I should. By midsummer, plumping tomatoes on fragrant vines motivate me. And in late summer, when the payoff arrives here in my zone 7 garden, I'm reminded why they're the most popular backyard vegetable.

Tomatoes, of course, are technically fruits, as is every crop with seeds inside its edible part. True vegetables are plant parts such as flowers, stems, leaves and roots. Still, we colloquially refer to tomatoes as vegetables, so who am I to argue?

Every year, I grow at least one new-to-me variety in hopes of discovering the next best thing, but in the end, I keep returning to the same five superstars (all require a minimum of 6-8 hours of direct sunlight daily and about 1 to 1½ inches of water per week):

## Bull's hearts, or oxhearts

These are staples in my raised beds. I fell in love with them on a trip years ago to Italy's Amalfi Coast, where they're called cuore di bue; in France, they're coeur de boeuf. Your seed packet might call them by any of these names (tomato, to-mah-to!).

Plants produce large, meaty, fragrant and tasty heart-shaped (human, not Valentine's) fruit with few seeds. They make great sal-

ads, sandwiches and, because of their low water content, tomato paste and sauce, too.

There are variations among subtypes (pink, Russian, Hungarian, etc.). Some are heirloom; others, hybrids. Expect most to be ready for harvesting roughly 80 days after planting.

## Rutgers

First introduced to home gardeners in 1934, this is a new favorite in my garden. Technically hybrids bred by Rutgers University and the Campbell Soup Company, their seeds can be saved for replanting as with heirlooms because they have been open-pollinated. Sometimes called Jersey tomatoes, the round, bright red, flavorful, 4- to 6-ounce "slicer" tomatoes are nice and meaty, making them great for sandwiches and salads. You can expect to harvest in about 75 days.

## Big Boys

These may look like perfectly round, boring supermarket tomatoes, but just one bite will put an end to the comparison. Among the tastiest of the hybrids, the beefsteak was introduced by the Burpee Seed Company in 1949. Plants are highly productive, pumping out a steady stream of (at least) 10- to 12-ounce, aromatic tomatoes starting about 78 days after planting.

## Sungold cherry tomatoes

These have a somewhat cult following among tomato growers, myself included. Since they're prone to splitting, they aren't typically found in grocery stores, so un-



(Hudson Valley Seed Co. via AP)

This undated image provided by Hudson Valley Seed Co. shows a container of candy-sweet Sungold cherry tomatoes.

less you're lucky enough to stumble upon them at the farmers' market, you'll have to grow these babies yourself if you want to taste what all the fuss is about. Plants produce clusters of candy-sweet, low-acid, orange tomatoes, each approximately an inch wide. Use them in salads and crudite platters, or just snack on them right off the

plant. Ready in about 60-65 days.

## Brandywines

Large, juicy heirloom beefsteaks that date to the late 1800s. The plant has potato-type foliage and produces 6-to 7-inch pinkish-red fruits that weigh up to a pound apiece and make perfectly sized sandwich slices. Pink-fruited varieties are available, as well.

## GENERAL PURCHASING REGULATIONS

[Adopted under Article 5.14 of the Charter of the Town of Hudson, 1 continued by motion of the Board of Selectmen 7-1-1992; amended 2-23-1993; 3-3-1999; 10-28-2003; 7-11-2023 by the Board of Selectmen.]

### § 98-1. Policy stated.

It shall be the policy of the Town of Hudson, New Hampshire, as adopted by the Board of Selectmen that:

A. All municipal purchasing and procurement activities are conducted in a fair, impartial, transparent, and ethical manner that maintains public confidence in the integrity of municipal government.

B. The Administrative Code shall establish purchasing and contract procedures, including the assignment of all responsibilities for such purchases, to the Board or Selectman or its designee, or such purchasing agent as established by the legislative body, and the combination purchasing of similar articles by different departments.

C. The Board of Selectman (BOS) shall establish from time-to-time dollar limits for purchases and contracts, which must be by competitive bid, and shall establish the bidding procedures. No competitive bids shall be required when purchasing through the State of New Hampshire bid prices.

D. Requirements for bids may be waived in specific instances by a majority vote of the BOS in attendance at a duly advertised meeting. The BOS shall establish dollar amounts for purchases or contracts, beyond which no purchase shall be made or contracts entered into without the affirmative vote of a majority of the BOS in attendance at a duly advertised meeting. Once the BOS has voted to make a purchase or enter into a contract, the Chairman shall carry out the vote of the BOS and enter into such transaction on behalf of the Town.

E. The purchase of, or the contract for the provision of, all materials, supplies, and contractual services utilized by any agency of the Town of Hudson shall be pursued in accordance with the provisions of this article and other such rules and regulations, as may be promulgated by the Finance Director with the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

F. In no instance shall such rules and regulations promulgated by the Finance Director, with the approval of the BOS, contradict any provision of this article. The provisions of these rules do not apply to the acquisition or disposition of real property or improvements, nor does it apply to appurtenant structures valued over \$10,000.

### § 98-2. Purchasing agent.

The Finance Director of the Town shall serve as the Board of Selectmen's designee as Purchasing Agent. The Town Administrator will serve in such capacity should the Finance Director be unavailable.

### § 98-3. Powers and duties of the purchasing agent.

The Finance Director shall direct the operation of the Town's purchasing system as follows:

With the approval of the BOS, the Finance Director shall establish, and amend, when necessary, all rules and regulations allowed by this article and necessary to the effective operation of the purchasing system.

A. The Finance Director shall approve and/or negotiate all purchases and contracts made by the Town. All such approvals or negotiations are subject to the review and/or approval of the BOS unless otherwise provided for in this article.

B. The Finance Director shall prescribe and maintain such forms as he/she shall find reasonable and necessary to fulfill the purpose of this article.

C. The Finance Director shall prepare and adopt a standard purchasing nomenclature for using agencies and suppliers.

D. When deemed necessary or desirable, the Finance Director shall combine requirements of using agencies to effect delivery, unit cost or other procurement factors that are in the best interests of the Town.

E. When deemed necessary or desirable, the Finance Director, with the approval of the BOS, shall have the authority to join with other units of government in cooperative purchasing plans to effect delivery, unit cost or other procurement factors that are in the best interests of the Town.

F. With the approval of the BOS, the Finance Director shall implement the conditions and terms under which services, materials, and supplies may be acquired from federal, state, school, and other government agencies or associated organizations and to negotiate the prices of such purchases.

G. The Finance Director shall maintain such stores of materials and supplies as he/she deems necessary to support the individual and/or aggregate requirements of the using agencies. The distribution of items from such stores shall be executed only upon the approval of the Finance Director according to rules and regulations promulgated by the Finance Director.

H. With the approval of the BOS and in cooperation with using agencies, the Finance Director may declare any operating equipment, materials and supplies surplus. After reasonable public notice, the Finance Director, with the approval of the BOS, may dispose of any item declared to be surplus in a manner that encourages the most desirable financial arrangement for the Town and provides for equal opportunity for participation by the public.

### § 98-4. Conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest exists when an individual's personal, financial, business, family, or organizational interests could reasonably be expected to influence, or appear to influence, the individual's judgment or actions regarding a municipal procurement decision.

Conflicts may be actual, potential, or perceived.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Ownership or financial interest in a vendor or contractor.
- (2) Employment by, or consulting arrangements with, a vendor or contractor.
- (3) Receipt of compensation, commissions, gifts, or benefits from a vendor.
- (4) A spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, or other immediate family member having a financial interest in a procurement matter.
- (5) Service as an officer, director, trustee, or board member of an organization seeking municipal business.
- (6) Any circumstance in which an individual's impartiality could reasonably be questioned.

Any municipal official, employee, volunteer, committee member, or agent who becomes aware of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest shall promptly disclose the conflict in writing to the Finance Director, Town Administrator, or other designated official. Disclosure shall occur before participating in discussions, evaluations, recommendations, negotiations, voting, approvals, or other procurement-related decisions. Written disclosures shall be maintained as part of the procurement record. Further, no person shall attempt to improperly influence a procurement decision through gifts or favors, political pressure, personal relationships, undisclosed lobbying, misrepresentation of qualifications or misuse of confidential information. Any attempt to improperly influence a procurement process shall be documented and may result in disqualification of a vendor or contractor.

Any purchase order or contract within the purview of this article in which the Finance Director, or any officer or employee of the Town, is financially interested directly or indirectly shall be void; except that, before the execution of a purchase order or contract, the BOS shall have the authority to waive compliance with this provision when it finds such action to be in the best interest of the Town.

### § 98-5. Selectmen action required for purchases and contracts over \$50,000.

A. A majority vote of the Board of Selectmen in attendance at a duly advertised meeting is required to approve any purchases or contracts of \$50,000 or more. In support of the consideration of such action, the requesting Department Head, copying the Finance Director, must provide the following information:

(1) The specific spending line or project budget to which the purchase or contract would be charged;

(2) Confirmation that the budget impact of the proposed purchase or contract does not give rise to the Town authorizing an appropriation not budgeted at the annual budget, unless voted by a majority of the BOS after a public hearing, conducted by the BOS, held to discuss an appropriation transfer, and/or that no money shall be drawn from the Treasury of the Town, nor shall any obligation for the expenditure of money be incurred except pursuant to a budget appropriation.

(3) Confirmation that advertising and competitive bidding procedures were followed as provided for in Subsection A(4) below or § 98-8. Procurement Waiver.

(4) A recommendation for award of purchase or contract to the lowest responsible bidder in accordance with the best interest of the Town.

a. Responsible Bidder: a bidder able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Town that the bidder has the ability, capacity, resources, fitness, and expertise to execute the project in accordance with the specifications in a manner that is likely to result in timely completion of a high-quality project. The determination that a bidder is responsible is made by the Finance Director in consultation with the Department Head.

b. Responsive Bid: is one that meets the requirements of the specifications of the request and the Town's contractual terms and conditions, including completeness of the quotation, forms, inclusion of references and attachments and completion of required responses. The determination that a bid is responsive is made by the requesting Department Head or an evaluation committee.

B. The BOS has the absolute authority to confirm or deny whether the process prescribes a responsible bidder and/or a responsive bid.

C. The BOS may reject any or all bids on the recommendation of the Finance Director or the requesting Department Head, for other stated cause. Upon approval by the BOS for a purchase or contract of \$50,000 or more, the Department Head is authorized to execute such contractual instruments as may be required to complete the transaction.

### § 98-6. Rules and regulations for purchases and contracts up to \$50,000.

A. For purchases and contracts less than \$50,000, the Finance Director shall establish rules and regulations that assure the following:

- (1) Competition;
- (2) Equal opportunity as required by applicable federal, state, and Town laws;
- (3) Contractual protection of the Town;
- (4) Award of purchases and contracts to the lowest responsible bidder in accordance with the best interest of the Town; and
- (5) Compliance with the provisions of § 98-5A(2).

B. Purchases, services, and contracts \$0 - \$20,000

C. Purchases, services, and contracts \$20,001 - \$50,000

(1) A minimum of three (3) documented formal quotations from vendor(s) on their official letterhead to be obtained by or provided to the Finance Director. Pricing illustrated in emails from vendors are generally not accepted as formal quotations but may be considered.

### § 98-7. Bidding procedures. for purchases and contracts over \$50,000

For all planned purchases and contracts of goods and services estimated to total \$50,001 or more, the following shall be required.

A. Request for Bid (RFB), Request for Proposals (RFP), and Request for Qualifications (RFQ):

(1) Included within RFB, RFP, RFQ, a description in the form of specifications, proposed scope of services, or other such documentation shall be developed that allows prospective bidders to make a responsive bid in accordance with the best interests of the Town. Such specifications, proposed scope of services or other such documentation shall be reviewed for compliance with all relevant. Town policies and procedures by the Finance Director, and by the Town Administrator.

(2) The requesting department, in consultation with Finance Director, will prepare the RFB, RFP, RFQ. The requesting department will establish an Evaluation Committee, as necessary for RFP and RFQ, to evaluate proposals received in response thereof in accordance with the terms and conditions agreed upon. The requesting department will coordinate the issuance of the RFB, RFP, or RFQ to vendors. If necessary, the requesting department, will prepare any/all addenda. The requesting department will be responsible for ensuring that all vendors are initially provided with a copy of the RFB, RFP, or RFQ, and receive all addenda that may be issued. Addenda may be issued by fax, regular mail, or email and must be posted on the Town's website. After the separate services and price proposals have been submitted, the committee, as applicable in § 98-7 (A) 2, will review the qualifications of the firm. Formal documentation must be submitted to the Finance Director of how each proposer ranked for their qualifications. It is recommended that a matrix is used to document the ratings of each firm based on the criteria outline in the RFP and/or RFQ. Only after firms have been ranked based on their qualifications may the committee open the cost proposal submitted by each vendor. The Finance Director will not release the price proposals until he/she has received the ranking matrix from the evaluation committee. The bidder that ranks the highest based on qualification should be awarded the bid as long as the price proposed is not significantly higher than the other bidders. In the event that the price is significantly higher than other bidders, the second highest ranking bidder based on qualifications may be selected. The final award shall be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

(3) An RFB, RFP, and RFQ process may be through invitation only if the requesting Department can provide adequate information thereof to the Board of Selectmen for such a process exclusive of public notice.

(4) Departments may advertise for pre-qualification lists and maintain as such for a three-year period. Pre-qualified vendors will be exclusively offered to bid any potential requests for services of \$50,000 or more up to \$150,000. At least three pre-qualified bidders will be required to form any list thereof.

B. Solicitation of bids. Bids shall be solicited as follows:

(1) At least four qualified bidders shall receive direct notice via email, of an opportunity of interest to bid on the basis of documentation as described in § 98-7A. If fewer than four qualified bidders are alerted to bid, the reasons shall be documented.

(2) The Town's desire to receive bids shall be duly published by public notice in at least one general circulation news publication that serves the Greater Nashua Area. Such advertisement shall briefly describe the service, material, supply, or equipment to be purchased, the method of obtaining the complete description of the desired service, material, supply, or equipment, the form in which the bid is to be delivered to the Town, the time, date and location of receipt of the bid, and the time, date, and location for opening and announcement of bids. Such advertisement shall appear at least 14 calendar days before the planned date of receipt of bids.

(3) All departments shall complete the request for proposal/bid checklist, which will be submitted and filed with the bid award package.

C. Determination of successful bidder. For any purchase or contract of \$50,000 or more, the Department Head, copying the Finance Director, shall submit a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, as described in § 98-5, no more than 30 days after the opening and/or announcement of bids.

D. Disqualified bidders. Any bidders which miss the deadline posted publicly and within the bid document, or that are determined to not be responsible bidders, shall be disqualified. A

E. Board of Selectmen purview allows review and consideration of the past course of dealings that the Town has had, if any, with a prospective bidder, respondent, contractor, or employee in evaluating a response to any Town solicitation for bids, proposals, work, or employment.

F. Sole Source Procurement. Can be defined as any procurement/contract entered into without competitive process, based on a verifiable justification that only one known source exists or that only one single supplier can fulfill the requirements. The Board of Selectmen may consider sole source for any monetary request however it shall be the burden of the requesting department to certify one of the following:

- (1) Uniqueness of items or services to be procured from the proposed contractor or vendor (e.g., compatibility or patent issues) •
- (2) How the department determined that the item or service is only available from one source (e.g., market survey results, independent agency research, patented or proprietary system) •
- (3) Explanation of need for contractors' expertise linked to the current project (e.g., knowledge of project management, responsiveness, experience of contractor personnel, and/or prior work on earlier phases of project) •
- (4) Any additional information that would support the case.

### § 98-8. Procurement Waiver.

The bidding procedures described above may be waived if in the Finance Directors judgment:

A. The specific product or service is obtainable from only one source as verified by § 98-7 E.

B. There is insufficient time for the formal process due to documented, extraordinary/emergency circumstances. An attempt should be made to obtain at least three verbal quotes in this type of event.

C. The goods or services may be purchased from a vendor from whom the Town has purchased the goods or services in the past and is willing to honor the prior quotation/bids.

D. It would be in the best interest of the town to utilize the State of New Hampshire or any other surrounding state's contract list pricing and/or any regional cooperative purchasing consortiums that the Town is eligible to participate in and/or through association.

E. Prior/in-depth knowledge of complex systems in town. Areas that this cover includes: HCTV, monitoring/maintenance for the Intelligent Traffic Systems, and certain software maintenance for the water and sewer departments (SCADA).

F. Contracts with labor relations representatives, lawyers, certified public accountants, banking services, architects, engineers, and related professionals. Or as previously procured through a formal process.

G. The issuance of bonds, BANs, notes, TANs, etc. in accordance with procedures established by law.

H. Purchases are made when the funding source is a gift or grant. Under these circumstances the department should follow the guidance of the grantor/donor.

### § 98-9. Contracting Authority.

A. Subject to other provisions of this article and consistent with other applicable provisions of the laws of the state of New Hampshire and the Town of Hudson, the BOS is authorized to execute such contractual instruments as may be required to complete the purchase of any operating equipment, material, supply, service, or improvement to real property on behalf of all agencies of the Town of Hudson.

B. The BOS reserves the right to extend existing contracts by any number of subsequent years as recommended by the requesting Department and Finance Director provided it is in the Town's best interest. Any such extensions shall be heard and voted on at a duly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting.

C. The BOS may assign contracting authority, i.e., signature privilege, to the Chairman of the Planning Board for Land Use Fees called "Agency Fees," listed as 1260, 1270, and other land use fees that may be agreed to by the Planning Board and with the signature of the developer to pay for 100% of any improvement, without Town matching funds, connected with any Planning Board approved development. All purchases of goods and/or services must comply with all of the policies and regulations of the Town of Hudson and this Purchasing Policy. No expenditure of Agency Fee monies that would hold the Town of Hudson liable for reimbursement or matching funds, and therefore impact the tax rate for the Town of Hudson, may be made without the express authorization of the Board of Selectmen in compliance with this Purchasing Policy.

D. Each land use board may accept and use gifts, grants, or contributions for the exercise of its functions, in accordance with the purchasing policy procedures established herein.

### § 98-10. Expenditure Authority

The following signature requirements will apply for Purchase Orders:

\$1 - \$3,000: Department Head  
\$3,001 - \$10,000: Department Head, Finance Director, Town Administrator  
\$10,001 - \$30,000: Department Head, Finance Director, Town Administrator, BOS Chairman  
\$30,001 - \$50,000: Department Head, Finance Director, Town Administrator, BOS Majority  
Over \$50,001: Department Head, Finance Director, Town Administrator, BOS Meeting Approval

Purchase orders may be increased by a maximum of ten (10) percent without follow up signatory requirements provided the budgeted allocation allows notwithstanding does not create an over expenditure within the overall cost center.