



GEORGESON
BOTANICAL GARDEN



University of Alaska Fairbanks
School of Natural Resources and Extension



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The Best Garden Tomatoes in Alaska

by
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Long-time Fairbanksan, John Holm, is best known for his expertise in growing greenhouse and nursery crops and for years sharing his knowledge with an appreciative community. Many Fairbanks gardeners also know of his passion for fresh, red, garden-ripened tomatoes. The first tomato that ripened reliably in home gardens ('Early Tanana') was developed by Dr. Arvo Kallio at the Agricultural Experiment Station in the 1960s. However, nothing surpasses the yield, fruit quality and field ripening ability of 'Subarctic 25'. This cultivar was bred by John Holm and released in the mid 1970s. It ripens well outdoors, even without the aid of clear plastic mulch.

Since the 1970s John has been busy breeding more plants to produce a large-sized tomato that would ripen without plastic mulch in interior Alaska. In September, John donated breeder's seed of six of his most important cultivars to the Georgeson Botanical Garden. Seed from 'Polar Baby', 'Subarctic 25', 'Alpha', 'Polar Star', 'Polar Gem', and 'Polar Beauty' will be maintained in our germplasm repository and will be tested for germination every five years. If germination percentages drop, we will grow plants in the Garden to maintain a fresh supply of seeds. In addition, plants will be grown annually in the Family Food Garden. We are pleased to add John's outstanding tomatoes to our permanent collection and look forward to testing more of his cultivars in the future.

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