

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 1-16-08) Spring Dreams with Garden Catalogues © 2008

While I'm writing this column tonight, snow is piling up outside in earnest. There's nothing like pouring through a few gardening catalogues to get you feeling warm and hopeful again.

The Territorial Seed Company catalogue in the mailbox is always a welcome site. This year's edition has even more pages than usual it seems. A few of the new veggies for this year are: Red Samurai Carrot, Chocolate Cherry Tomato, and Portofino Squash. And if you don't like to grow veggies Territorial offers annual flowers too, like Nuanza Copper Purple Osteospermum.

Red Samurai Carrot – Territorial says, “We've searched worldwide for a great tasting, true red carrot and finally found it in Japan!” The description says samurai will “add panache to salads.” It's promised that it tastes even better cooked. Samurai ripens in 75 days. “The slim tapered roots reach 11 inches.” I wonder what kind of soil these Territorial carrots were grown in? It will be fun to try to grow it to 11 inches. I'll bet Chris Smith can do it.

Chocolate Cherry Tomato is “as irresistible as a chocolate covered cherry, but without all of the guilt.” Don't you just love this description? Wait until you see the photo of these beauties. I can almost taste their sweetness. For sure I want to grow this tomato in a big container on our deck up against the house's hot siding. Cherry tomatoes are the only tomatoes I spend time on. The others I purchase at our local farmers markets. Our pots of cherry tomatoes are right outside the kitchen/dining room door. Quite handy. Chocolate Cherry will ripen in 70 days.

Portofino Squash is a Romanesco. It has “classic, lengthwise ridges. When sliced crosswise, they look like little starbursts!” How could a gardener resist growing a few of these beauties, especially given the description? The squash is dark green with contrasting light green ridges. “Portofino bears on bush-type plants with an open habit.” It will ripen in 55 days which should make it perfect for growing here.

Osteospermum Nuanza Copper Purple is “an avante-garde shade of tawny plum” and is available only as a plant. I have a hunch several of our local nurseries may be carrying this beauty. Osteospermum is also known as African daisy. The page of the catalogue showing this annual plant also shows Sweet Sunshine Compact Lime petunia. The compact double ruffly blooms look more like carnations and are the palest limey green. The blooms almost appear white with lightest lime green striping.

Contact Territorial at Territorial Seed Company, PO Box 158, Cottage Grove, OR 97424-0061 or www.territoralseed.com where you can place orders 24/7. Phone orders are accepted at 800-626-0866 and Fax orders 888-657-3131. Customer service is 541-942-9547. Many of our local nurseries carry packets of Territorial Seeds too.

Tomato Growers Supply Company is based in Ft. Myers, Florida. You'll want this catalogue just to drool over the full color illustrations of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants galore. Check out www.tomatogrowers.com or phone 1-888-478-7333 to view or order a catalogue.

One Green World out of Molalla, Oregon offers "unique fruits and ornamentals from around the world." Columnar apples are especially appealing and would be easy to grow, monitor and care for. Other offerings are disease-resistant apples and early ripening pears. The catalogue is worth perusing just to see the wide variety of berry, trees and vines available to grow fruit to consume.