**Harvest of the Month**

**Tomatoes**

- The tomato is the world’s most popular fruit with more than 60 million tons produced worldwide.

- There are more than 4,000 varieties of tomatoes ranging in size, shape and color.

- According to the USDA, Americans eat more than 22 pounds of tomatoes each year, more than half of this amount in the form of ketchup and/or tomato sauce.

**Why Eat Your Colors?**

Tomatoes can be red, yellow/orange or green.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color Groups</th>
<th>Health Benefits</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>heart health, memory function and urinary tract health</td>
<td>Red tomatoes, red apples, pink grapefruit, beets, red peppers, red onions and radishes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow/Orange</td>
<td>heart health, vision health and a healthy immune system</td>
<td>Yellow tomatoes, yellow pears, oranges, grapefruit, sweet potatoes, yellow peppers and rutabagas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>vision health and strong bones and teeth</td>
<td>Green tomatoes, green pears, kiwis, avocados, green peppers, cucumbers and zucchini</td>
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**A Rich History**

- Tomatoes were first cultivated by the Aztecs and Incas in South America, as early as 700 A.D.
- Mexico’s Aztecs and Mayans gave the tomato its name, first “xitomatle,” then “tomatle” or “tomati.”
- In the mid-1500s, Spanish conquistadors carried tomato seeds back to Europe, where they were embraced in Italy, Spain and Portugal.
- In 17th and 18th century England, tomatoes were believed to be poisonous. (Eating the stems and leaves may cause illness and should be avoided.)
- Thomas Jefferson was one of the first Americans to grow tomatoes at his Virginia home as early as 1781.
- Botanically, the tomato is a fruit. However, in 1893, the U.S. Supreme Court declared it as a vegetable.

There are thousands of types of tomatoes! Try a variety to see which ones you like best.

Refrigerating tomatoes damages the membranes inside the fruit walls, causing the tomato to lose flavor and develop a mealy texture. The best place to store them is on the kitchen counter at room temperature.