



Isabelle Scott in her Specialty Garden Supply

5/6/82 B05 Sentinel

# 'Tomato Lady' Turns Hobby Into Mailorder Seed Business

The "tomato lady" of Santa Cruz has recently turned an avid gardening hobby into a specialized mailorder seed business, catering specifically to the local home gardener.

Isabelle Scott's nickname around her east side neighborhood jokingly came about because of her unusual habit of growing tomatoes. Last season, for example, she grew more than 40 plants!

She is now the owner-operator of a home mailorder seed business in her part-time. Called Specialty Garden Supply, if any name fits this one does.

"Deciding which seeds to buy that will do best in the Santa Cruz area, finding economical seed packets that are not too big and growing a variety of different vegetables and flowers without wasting money on too many seeds are all difficulties for the small, home gardener," explained Scott. "I should know, I've been one for 15 years — the last 10 in Santa Cruz."

Ninety percent of the 32 types of seeds Scott offers, she has actually grown and experimented with in her garden. She knows they are successful and have bought them in bulk from large and small commercial seed houses alike, and re-packaged them in economical packets.

Because of this, her prices also are inexpensive compared to commercial seeds. Most packets are under 30 cents and are sized for the small home garden so as not to

waste seeds.

Needless to say, every home gardener one time or another has wasted seeds because of their overabundance or lack of garden space.

Being local, Scott prides herself in being able to meet orders "within a day or two" of receipt.

Her order form is personalized in a sense with the addition of a suggestion box. Customers may check what type of seeds they would like her to carry.

This has already gotten Scott thinking about such future specialties as jam and jelly-making supplies and gourmet and imported seeds. She also hopes to provide a "gardener's notebook" of gardening advice in the future.

Being especially interested in growing vegetables, the Specialty Garden Supply catalog is heavily-weighted with vegetables.

Tomatoes include the traditional Early Girl and Better Boy, as well as the new Basket King hybrid. There's even a Mexican type called Tomatillo, which is a green tomato used in chile sauces and cooking.

Other Mexican specialties that are unusual are Cilantro or Chinese parsley, and Chile Ancho, which is similar to an Anaheim chile.

For a free catalog, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Specialty Garden Supply, 418 Sumner St., Santa Cruz, 95062.