

CHERRY / GRAPE TOMATO VARIETIES

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**Extension Service
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This project was designed to help gardeners in the Treasure Valley determine which cherry/grape type tomatoes to plant. Since there are a wide range of tomato varieties available, only those varieties sold in local retail establishments were chosen for evaluation. Some of the parameters evaluated included productivity, disease resistance and palatability.

Grape tomatoes have thick skins, low water con-

tent and a flavor similar to Roma tomatoes, however they will store longer than cherry tomatoes.

Cherry tomatoes have thin skins, high water content and can have variable size, depending on variety. They should be eaten within a few days of harvest.

The varieties planted in this trial are listed in Table 1.



Sweet Cherry 100 Tomatoes



Sweet Olive

Table 1. Tomato cherry/grape varieties tested at the OSU Malheur Experiment Station, Ontario, OR. 2009.

| Variety | Fruit Type | Fruit Color | Size & Shape |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Yellow Cherry | cherry | yellow | ½ - 1 inch diameter - round |
| Tumbling Tom Red | cherry | red | 1 - 1 ½ inches diameter - round |
| Grape | grape | red | 1 inch length, oblong, Roma type |
| Juliet | grape | red | 1 ½ inches length, oblong, Roma type |
| Juliet Roma Grape | grape | red | 1 ½ inches length, oblong, Roma type |
| Husky Cherry Red | cherry | red | 1 ¼-1 ½ inches diameter - round |
| Sweet Chelsea | cherry | red | 1-1 ½ inches diameter - round |
| Yellow Pear | cherry | yellow | 1 - 1 ½ inches diameter - pear shaped |
| Sun Gold | cherry | orange | ½ - ¾ inch diameter - round |
| Sweet Cherry 100 | cherry | red | ½ - ¾ inch diameter - round |
| Porters Dark Cherry | cherry | red | 1 - 1 ½ inches diameter - round |
| Sweet Olive | cherry | red | ½ - ¾ inch diameter - round |
| Christmas Grape | cherry | red | ½ - ¾ inch diameter - round |

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Fruit size is important for many consumers. The smaller-sized cherry/grape tomatoes are often consumed in salads. Those that can be eaten whole, are often preferred over those that must be cut before being consumed. Those varieties that produced fruit in the ½ - ¾ inch size could be eaten whole, while the larger fruits need to be cut.

Many tomatoes are susceptible to the soil, foliage and fruit diseases common in this area. Some of the most common are verticillium wilt, early blight, leaf roll virus, curly top virus and blossom end rot.

Selecting varieties that are resistant to these diseases will help ensure a productive garden.

Only the variety Tumbling Tom appeared susceptible to the soil-borne disease verticillium wilt. Juliet-Roma and Sweet Olive displayed mild virus symptoms. All of the other varieties had healthy foliage throughout the growing season.

Other important factors when selecting cherry/grape tomato varieties are determinate vs. indeterminate growth, potential fruit yield and earliness.

These are listed in Table 2. Determinate and indeterminate determine whether the fruit will all set at approximately the same time (determinate) or will set a few fruits continuously throughout the season (indeterminate). A determinate-type plant is usually more favorable for regular tomatoes where having the fruit all mature about the same time is desirable for canning.



Sun Gold Tomatoes



Yellow Pear



Juliet Roma Grape

Table 2. Characteristics of tomato cherry/grape varieties tested at the OSU Malheur Experiment Station, Ontario, OR. 2009.

| Variety | Determinate/ Indeterminate | Vine Characteristics | Earliness | Potential Yield |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Yellow Cherry | determinate | compact | early | high |
| Tumbling Tom Red | indeterminate | sub-compact | moderate | very low |
| Grape | indeterminate | compact | moderate | moderate |
| Juliet | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | moderate |
| Juliet Roma Grape | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | moderate |
| Husky Cherry Red | indeterminate | moderately spreading | moderate | moderate |
| Sweet Chelsea | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | moderate |
| Yellow Pear | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | high |
| Sun Gold | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | high |
| Sweet Cherry 100 | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | high |
| Porters Dark Cherry | indeterminate | spreading | moderate | moderate |
| Sweet Olive | indeterminate | spreading | early | high |
| Christmas Grape | indeterminate | spreading | late | moderate |

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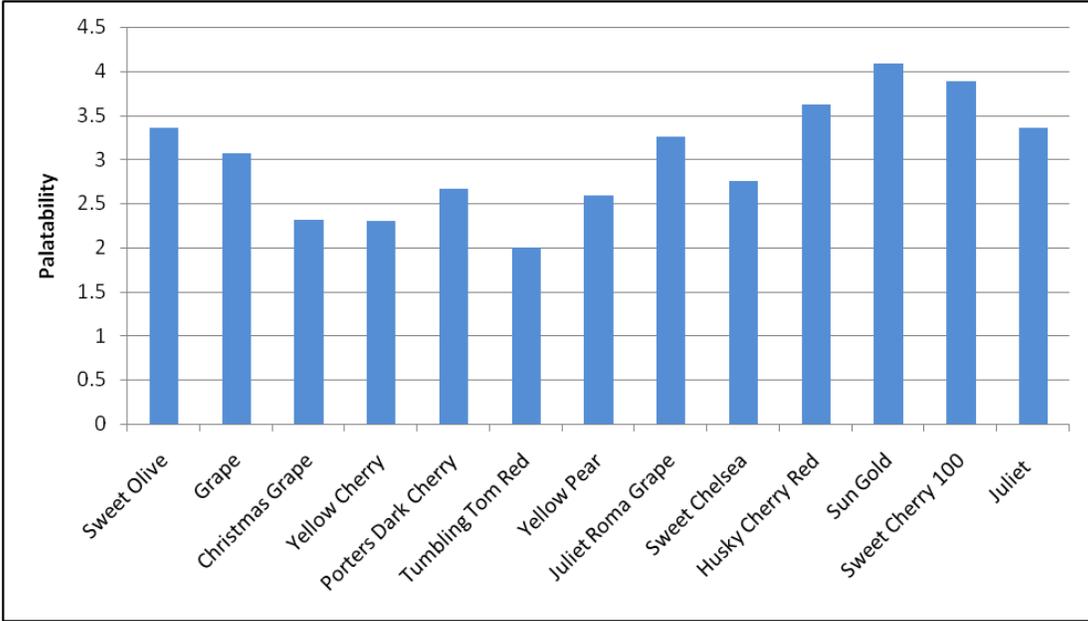


Figure 1. Taste panel evaluation of palatability with 0 = not palatable and 5 = extremely palatable. OSU Malheur Experiment Station, Ontario, OR. 2009.

The final characteristic evaluated was palatability or tastiness. A panel of consumers was used to evaluate taste preference (Figure 1). Sun Gold, Sweet Cherry 100 and

Husky Cherry Red were rated highest in flavor, while Christmas Grape, Yellow Cherry and Tumbling Tom Red were the

lowest. Only five of the thirteen varieties received votes as “best tasting” by panel members, with Sun Gold receiving the most votes (Figure 2).



Christmas Grape



Juliet



Husky Cherry Red



Porters Dark Cherry



Yellow Cherry



Grape



Tumbling Tom Red



Sweet Chelsea

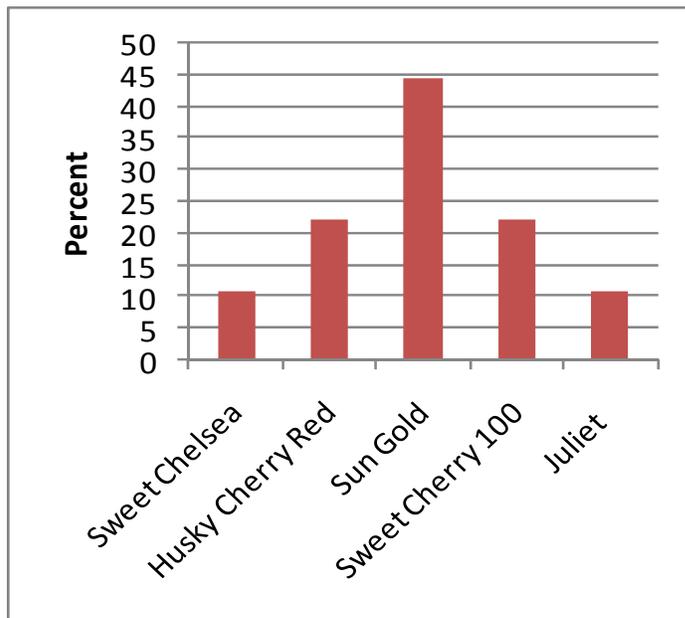


Figure 2. Varieties rated as “Best Tasting” by taste panel. OSU Malheur Experiment

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