

COMMON TOMATO VARIETIES

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There are numerous tomato varieties available to those who wish to grow one, a few or many tomato plants in their gardens. A survey of tomato transplant offerings at local stores showed over 50 different varieties for the home gardener to choose from, ranging from the familiar varieties to those with

unique characteristics. This study was designed to evaluate each variety so that the consumer might have an understanding of some of the desirable characteristics available. Cherry and grape tomatoes are discussed in a separate publication. (See *Cherry/Grape Varieties*)

Tomatoes can be classified by either fruit type or growth pattern characteristics. Fruit types most commonly grown are cherry, plum (Roma), and the common table varieties. Growth characteristics are usually determinate or indeterminate.

Determinate vine growth means that the plant will grow a certain amount of foliage, then future growth is directed towards fruit production. These varietal types generally produce most of their fruit during a

Table 1. Tomato varieties listed in order of adaptability to the Malheur growing area. Malheur Experiment Station, Oregon State University, Ontario, OR, 2009.

Rank*	Variety	Disease		Yield	Observations
		Resistance	Set		
1	Big Boy	High	High	High	-
2	Bonnie Select	High	High	High	-
3	Better Boy	High	High	High	Some misshapen fruit
4	Big Beef	High	High	High	-
5	Big Red	Medium	High	High	Some blossom end rot
6	Beefmaster	Medium	High	High	-
7	Goliath	Low	High	High	-
8	Oregon Star	High	Low	Medium	-
9	Pic Red	Low	High	High	-
10	Original	Low	High	High	-
11	Fantastic	High	Low	Medium	-
12	Park's Whopper	High	Low	Medium	-
13	Bush Goliath	Low	High	High	-
14	Celebrity	Low	High	Medium	-
15	Ace 55	Medium	High	Medium	Some fruit cracking
16	Mortgage Lifter	Medium	Low	Medium	Some fruit cracking
17	Heartland	Low	Low	Medium	-
18	Early Girl	Medium	Low	Low	-
19	Heatwave	Low	High	Low	-

*Ranked from 1 to 19 with 1 being the best adapted.



Big Boy



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shortened production period. This is a desirable characteristic if the fruit is going to be processed (canned, bottled, etc.), but undesirable if the consumer wants fresh tomatoes throughout the summer and fall months.

Indeterminate means the plant continues to grow new stems and leaves throughout the growing season, along with fruit setting on a continuing basis. Some indeterminate varieties tend to set fruit late and produce mainly foliage.

Common Tomato Varieties

Table 1 lists some of the common varieties in order of adaptability to this area. This is one year's data, and varieties may perform differently from year to year. Table 2 lists all of the varieties tested.

Some of the characteristics evaluated included fruit size and set, fruit shape and disease resistance (verticillium, curly top, leaf roll).

Early Maturing Varieties

Often gardeners want early tomatoes. The Fourth of July lived up to its name, providing ripe tomatoes by the first week of July, although taste was not as desirable as in some of the later maturing varieties. Fruit size was moderate, but with a heavy set.

Patio is a semi-compact plant with low yield potential, but may be acceptable for container gardening. Fruit size was moderate with a moderate fruit set.

Better Bush was an excellent tasting early variety with compact foliage, large fruit and excellent yield. The compact foliage left the fruit exposed to the sun, resulting in sun scald. Some type of artificial shading may be necessary with this variety. The plants had slight virus symptoms, but it did not affect yield.

Original was rated as early, but not as early as the other three varieties. It was susceptible to both soil-borne and virus diseases, but still gave a good yield of moderate to large-sized fruit. Some artificial covering to prevent fruit scald may also be necessary with this semi-compact variety.

Heirloom Varieties

There were five heirloom varieties in this trial, Mr. Stripey, German Queen, Brandywine, Pink Brandywine and Red Beefsteak. All of these varieties have indeterminate growth characteristics with large, spreading vines. German Queen, Brandywine and Pink Brandywine all showed some susceptibility to the common soil and foliar diseases of the area. The late set was light, indicating low yield potential. The fruit was large, but susceptible to cracking or splitting. Mr. Stripey was also late with orange fruit that was often deformed.

Red Beefsteak, however produced fruit around mid-season with a heavy set of large, desirable fruit. Of the heirloom varieties, Red Beefsteak seemed most adapted to this area.

Roma Type

There were four Roma types grown, Roma, LaRoma, Window Box Roma and Health Kick. They all had very similar characteristics. All are compact, determinate plants. They all were at least moderately



Bonnie Select



Fourth of July



Purple Calabash



Big Red

susceptible to soil-borne and foliage virus diseases common to this area. They all set fruit late, but produced good yields.

Unique Varieties

There were several varieties with unique fruit characteristics, which may be of interest to home gardeners. These include Lemon Boy, Golden Jubilee, Tomato Black, Amana Orange, Purple Calabash, Paul Robeson and Valencia.

Lemon Boy was a vigorous variety with high yield of large, yellow fruit. There was a tendency for some growth cracks in the fruit.

Golden Jubilee was similar to Lemon Boy except that the fruit was slightly smaller with fewer growth cracks.

Tomato Black had fruit that was red with greenish black undertones. The plant was susceptible to soil-borne disease, fruit yield was moderate and fruit size was large, but with severe cracking.

Amana Orange produced a moderate yield of late, orange-colored tomatoes. The fruit was somewhat misshapen compared to most varieties.

Both Paul Robeson and Purple Calabash were very susceptible to soil-born and foliage disease, and produced a moderate amount of small-unusually-shaped, orange fruit.

Valencia was moderately susceptible to foliage disease and produced medium yields of medium-sized, orange fruit.

Varieties That Performed Poorly

Rutgers, Oregon Spring, Champion, Super Fantastic and Jet Star were all very susceptible to soil-borne and foliar diseases. None performed well in this trial.

Local Hybrids

Two local hybrids were also in the trial, Treasure Valley Giant and Kennington Big Red. Both varieties produced large-sized fruit, but the set was late August to September.

Table 2. Tomato variety, growth characteristic, fruit color and days to maturity.

Variety	Growth Characteristic	Fruit Color	Days to Maturity
Patio	Determinate	Red	65
Better Bush	Determinate	Red	68
Bush Goliath	Determinate	Red	68
Celebrity	Determinate	Red	70
Heatwave	Determinate	Red	70
Window Box Roma	Determinate	Red	70
Health Kick	Determinate	Red	72
Bonnie Select	Determinate	Red	75
Roma	Determinate	Red	75
Rutgers	Determinate	Red	75
Oregon Spring	Determinate	Red	85
LaRoma	Determinate	Red	70-80
Fourth of July	Indeterminate	Red	49



Golden Jubilee



Amana Orange

Variety	Growth Characteristic	Fruit Color	Days to Maturity
Early Girl	Indeterminate	Red	54
Mr. Stripecy (H)	Indeterminate	Red	60
Champion	Indeterminate	Red	65
Park's Whopper	Indeterminate	Red	65
Fantastic	Indeterminate	Red	70
Super Fantastic	Indeterminate	Red	70
Jet Star	Indeterminate	Red	72
Lemon Boy	Indeterminate	Yellow	72
Big Beef	Indeterminate	Red	73
Better Boy	Indeterminate	Red	75
Big Boy	Indeterminate	Red	78
Golden Jubilee	Indeterminate	Yellow	80
Ace 55	Indeterminate	Red	85
Mortgage Lifter	Indeterminate	Red	60-83
Goliath	Indeterminate	Red	65-85
German Queen (H)	Indeterminate	Red	75-80
Brandywine (H)	Indeterminate	Red	80-100
Pink Brandywine (H)	Indeterminate	Pink	80-100
Red Beefsteak (H)	Indeterminate	Red	90-115
Heartland	Semi-indeterminate	Red	68
Beefmaster	Indeterminate	Red	80
Big Red	Indeterminate	Red	Unknown
Original	Indeterminate	Red	Unknown
Pic Red	Indeterminate	Red	Unknown
Tomato Black	Indeterminate	Dark red with black undertones	Unknown
Kennington Big Red	Indeterminate	Red	Unknown
TV Giant	Indeterminate	Red	Unknown
Amana Orange	Indeterminate	Orange	Unknown
Oregon Star	Indeterminate	Red	Unknown
Purple Calabash	Indeterminate	Purplish red	Unknown
Paul Robeson	Indeterminate	Orange	Unknown
Valencia	Indeterminate	Orange	Unknown



Tomato Black



Better Boy



Window Box Roma

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