Garden Notes

 TOMATOES: SUGGESTED VARIETIES FOR THE SACRAMENTO AREA

Tomatoes win “most popular” in the home, summer vegetable garden by a landslide. Each gardener, however, has an opinion about the most reliable tomatoes (based on flavor, yield, and disease resistance) to plant each spring. Below are the tried-and-true tomato varieties UCCE Master Gardeners of Sacramento County have had the best results growing in their home gardens and at the Fair Oaks Horticulture Center.

Generally speaking, heirloom tomato varieties are more than 50 years old, open-pollinated, and often their seeds have been passed down by generations of family members. Hybrid tomato cultivars are newer (post 1950) and the result of crossing different parents to achieve an offspring with better disease resistance and higher yields, but not necessarily better flavor than heirlooms.

CHERRY/GRAPE TOMATOES
Black Cherry (black/brown, heirloom)          Sun Cherry (red, hybrid)
Chadwick Cherry (red, heirloom)              Sun Gold (yellow-orange, hybrid)
Green Doctors (olive green, open pollinated) Sun Sugar (orange, hybrid)
Green Grape (greenish yellow, heirloom)      Super Sweet 100 (red, hybrid)
Juliet (red, hybrid)                         Sweet 100 (red, hybrid)
Large Red Cherry (red, heirloom)             Sweet Million (red, hybrid)

Cherry and grape tomatoes are bite-sized for snacking and a staple of summer salads.

PASTE TOMATOES
Fresh Salsa (red, hybrid)                    Orange Banana (orange, heirloom)
Goldman’s Italian-American (red, open pollinated) Super Marzano (red, hybrid)
Italian Gold (yellow-orange, hybrid)         Yaqui (red, hybrid)

Paste tomatoes are used for sauces, catsup, tomato paste, and canning.

HYBRID SLICING TOMATOES
Ace (red)                                     Lemon Boy (yellow)
Better Boy (red)                               Oregon Spring (red)
Big Beef (red)                                 Park’s Whopper (red)
Brandy Boy (pink)                              Super Fantastic (red)
Celebrity (red)                                Tye-Dye (yellow-orange and red)
Dinner Plate (red)                             Whopper VFN (red)
Early Girl (red)

Slicers are larger than grape, cherry, and paste tomatoes. Some can weigh in excess of 2 pounds and would be classified as beefsteaks. They are often sliced and used in sandwiches.
HEIRLOOM SLICING TOMATOES

Abe Lincoln (red)  
Amana Orange (yellow-orange)  
Aunt Ruby’s German Green (green)  
Azoychka (yellow)  
Caspian Pink (pink)  
Cherokee Purple (purple/black)  
Costoluto Genovese (red)  
Eva Purple Ball (dark pink)  
Evergreen (green)  
Gold Medal (yellow-orange with red streaks)  
Hawaiian Pineapple (yellow-orange)  
Jaune Flamme (orange)  
Julia Child (deep pink)  

Kellogg’s Breakfast (orange)  
Lillian’s Yellow Heirloom (yellow)  
Marianna’s Peace (pink)  
Mortgage Lifter (pink)  
Omar’s Lebanese (pink)  
Paul Robeson (black)  
Pineapple (yellow with red streaking)  
Redfield Beauty (pink)  
Rose (deep pink)  
Rose de Berne (pink)  
Sarah Black (pink/purple)  
Virginia Sweets (yellow with red stripes)

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