

Plant The Right Tomato Varieties For Your Redding Garden

Leimone Waite, Master Gardener, Feb. 22, 2019

Q: In a 2018 Master Gardener column, you mentioned a list of tomatoes that grow well in Redding. Can you share the list with me? I don't know which ones to choose.

A: There are 15,000 known tomato varieties so narrowing down the choice can be challenging. This list was compiled from readers and our local Master Gardeners' experience growing different tomato varieties. This is not an all-inclusive list and we keep adding to it as we get recommendations from gardeners. These varieties do best here in the valley so if you're in the foothills or mountains you may have different varieties that perform better. We welcome recommendations of tomato varieties that have performed well for gardeners in our climate.

Tomato Variety	Type (D/I/C)
SCRUNG/PASTE TYPE	D=Determinate, I=Indeterminate
Alice	D, medium plant, red fruit
Amish Paste	I, red fruit
Banana Bush	D, small plant, red fruit
Valley Girl	D, red fruit
Celebrity	Semi-D, med. plant, large red fruit
Early Girl	I, large plant, red fruit
Jubal	I, grape size fruit
Orange Blossom	D, med. size orange fruit
Yellow Sublim	I, yellow fruit
Pinapple	I, large striped fruit
CHERRY TOMATOES	
Sungold	I, large plant, orange fruit
Sweet 100	I, large plant, red fruit

A list of some of the best tomato varieties to grow in Redding. (Photo: Master gardeners)

Tomato varieties are categorized as either determinate or indeterminate. Determinate tomatoes tend to be more compact bush types that stay below three feet. In general, these types are less affected by weather extremes. They will reach a certain age and then flower all at once so the fruit sets and ripens all at the same time. Many folks like these varieties if they are planning on canning or making sauce as you will get most of the fruit all at one time.

Indeterminate tomatoes will grow and set fruit until frost kills them if fruiting conditions are favorable. Because they grow all summer and are vining, they will require caging or staking for support. A well-fed indeterminate tomato can grow 10-12 feet tall. The big drawback with these varieties is that they can be a bit pickier about setting fruit if the conditions are too hot or the range between night and daytime temperatures is too extreme. Since Redding tends to have extremely hot weather in the summer, and weeks where there's a 50-degree difference between day and night time temperatures, these varieties may wait and not produce until late fall when conditions are favorable.

Choose the type(s) of tomato you enjoy. Tomatoes can range in size from the small marble-sized grape or cherry tomatoes, to over a one pound beefsteak type. And colors can also vary from striped green, to yellow, orange, pink, red or dark red. The orange and yellow varieties tend to be low acid and mild in flavor while darker ones tend to have the most intense tomato flavor.

The Shasta Master Gardeners Program can be reached by phone at 242-2219 or email mastergardener@shastacollege.edu. The gardener office is staffed by volunteers trained by the University of California to answer gardeners' questions using information based on scientific research.