

EVALUATION OF FRESH MARKET TOMATO CULTIVARS FOR SOUTHERN OHIO, 2003

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This cultivar trial evaluated 18 cultivars for their suitability in southern Ohio.

METHODS:

Seeds were planted on 16 May into 288-cell trays containing a peat-vermiculite soilless mix. Cells were thinned as needed to 1 plant/cell. Transplants were set into raised beds (covered with black plastic mulch with trickle irrigation under the plastic) 18" apart in the row on June 12, 2003. Rows were 5 foot apart. Experimental design was randomized complete block with 4 replications. The field is located in southwestern Ohio, Butler County 84° 39' west by 39° 18' north and the soil is a Miami Silt Loam. Four hundred lbs of K₂O was incorporated pre-plant. 157 units of N was applied through drip irrigation over the growing season. Weed control was accomplished using Treflan® (trifluralin) @ 2 pt/acre and Sencor® (metribuzin) @ 1 pt/acre. The standard commercial fungicide and insecticide program was followed, on a 7-10 day schedule. Harvest began on August 26 and final harvest was October 6, 2003.

RESULTS:

Plant health and quality remained good through the season with average fruit set and yield across cultivars. Early season harvest August 26 and September 3 ranged from 828 - 2513 25-lb cartons/acre (Table 1). SVR 1760036, SVR 0170334 and Solar Set R were the top performers showing potential for early season yields. Total marketable yield ranged from 2933 - 4060 25-lb cartons/acre. BHN 543, Florida 91 and Solar Set R had the highest total marketable yield. Average fruit weight ranged from .046 lbs. to 0.57 lbs. Solar Set R produced consistently throughout the harvest season.

DISCUSSION

This was one of the coolest and wettest seasons in recent history. Many of these cultivars show promise and it will be interesting to see how they perform under more typical weather conditions.

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