

TOMATO TEST: FRUIT SIZE

Do you know that there is a largest tomato contest at the Butler County Fair? Top prize is \$25 and second gets \$15 and third gets \$10. That being said, you might want to take a look at this latest data on large tomatoes.

Tom Fowler, Horticulture Specialist with the University of Missouri Extension Service, took data on a large tomato planting in both 2013 and 2014. His study included 47 different varieties in 2013 including those that some of our K-State Research & Extension Master Gardeners test for us. The test was repeated in 2014 but some varieties were lost due to cold weather. Also, not all varieties tested last year were tested this year and so we ended up with 21 that were tested both years. Of those only 16 were slicing tomatoes. This week we will look at individual fruit size.

This is two years of data. Although two years worth of data is better than a single year, more is always better as differing environmental conditions can have a significant impact on yield from year to year. The top ten varieties for fruit size are listed below. I have included the top 10 for when we combined the data from both years. Weight is given in ounces per individual fruit. We had 16 varieties that met these criteria and yet the same 10 varieties were the top ten in fruit size for both years. That doesn't happen often.

2013 & 2014

| No. | Variety | Weight | | | |
|-----|--------------|--------|----|-------------|-----|
| | | | 6 | Big Beef | 7.4 |
| 1 | Amana Orange | 12.2 | 7 | Red Bounty | 7.1 |
| 2 | German Queen | 10.4 | 8 | Black Krim | 6.8 |
| 3 | Beefmaster | 7.7 | 9 | Celebrity | 6.5 |
| 4 | BHN 961 | 7.5 | 10 | Scarlet Red | 6.5 |
| 5 | Florida 91 | 7.5 | | | |

Central Kansas Market Vegetable Growers Workshop

Locally grown vegetables are fresh, delicious, and can boost the local economy. The 6th annual Central Kansas Market Vegetable Growers Workshop, sponsored by Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, and Reno County Extension, will give both beginning and experienced vegetable growers new skills to improve their production methods and marketing skills for selling their local vegetables, while meeting an increasing demand for locally grown produce. The workshop will be held Saturday, February 7, 2015 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. in 4-H Hall at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center at 21st and Ridge in Wichita. Cost of registration is \$20 by January 31st and \$25 after that. The registration deadline is Thursday, February 5th. Register online at <http://2015ckmvgw.eventbrite.com/>

or by calling 316-660-0100. The workshop will cover the basic vegetable and fruit production issues, as well as special topics related to beekeeping, growing cut flowers, and wildlife pest control. The Keynote Speaker is Scott Thellman of Juniper Hill Farms in Lawrence, KS. He will be sharing how the farm has grown through selling vegetables in outlets other than the Farmers' Market. Lunch will be provided.

Caddo Sugar Maples

Sugar maples often have significant problems with our Kansas weather. Our hot, often dry summers and windy conditions can shorten the life of these trees. However, some sugar maples are better adapted to Kansas conditions than others. Our John C. Pair Horticulture Center has evaluated sugar maples for well more than 20 years and has identified selections that are much better adapted to Kansas. Of particular interest are the Caddo sugar maples which originated from an isolated population in Caddo, County, Oklahoma. These are true sugar maples and are considered an ectotype and are more drought tolerant, better adapted to high pH soils and more resistant to leaf scorch and tatter than the norm. Just how resistant to scorch is impressive. The last three weeks of August in 2003 saw temperatures at our research station over 100 degrees each day with no rain for the month prior. All other sugar maples in the trial had severely scorched leaves. Not a single leaf of any of the caddo maples was scorched. Leaf water potential readings taken pre-dawn showed all other trees in the trial past the wilting point while the Caddo maples were barely stressed. Another interesting characteristic of caddo maples is that they tend to retain their leaves in the winter and therefore have been suggested as screens or for use in windbreaks. Dr. John Pair, the late director of the Horticulture Center, selected and released two Caddo maples over 10 years ago. Both these selections color early and have consistent good red fall color. Drought tolerance and resistance to leaf scorch and leaf tatter are exceptional. However, neither will do well in a heavy clay soil that is frequently saturated. These trees can be damaged or killed if planted in wet sites. A home lawn that is watered more than twice a week would definitely qualify as a 'wet site'. The first selection, 'Autumn Splendor', has the traditional sugar maple growth pattern and needs plenty of room to mature. 'John Pair' is smaller and more compact and more likely to fit a residential landscape. This tree is also noted for a dense, uniform crown. If you are in the market for a sugar maple, consider these before making a final decision.