

# 2021 LARIMER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER CONTAINER TOMATO TRIALS

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## Purpose

There has been an explosion of interest in the growing of fresh vegetables by homeowners around the country. Many of these homeowners have extremely limited space and are looking for varieties to fill that confined space.

Small-fruited tomato (i.e., cherry, pear, grape) varieties are popular, but the vast majority have a larger, sprawling plant habit that may not work for small spaces. To address this issue, the Larimer County Master Gardeners conducted a three-variety evaluation trial. The varieties in the trial have a more compact habit and are commercially available.

## Varieties

- Patio Choice Yellow (round yellow fruit)
- Cherry Falls (round cherry fruit)
- Totem (round cherry fruit)

## Methodology

Tomatoes were seeded and grown in the greenhouse, until transplanting on June 6, 2021 into large containers as part of the CSU Annual Flower Trials. Each container had a single plant and were irrigated and fertilized via drip irrigation. Five containers per variety were utilized (with the exception of Totem that only had four replications). The plants were randomized within the allotted area and grown by trial staff. Maturity, yield, and average fruit size were collected for each variety.

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# 2021 Larimer County Master Gardener Container Tomato Trials

## Results

Cherry Falls was an early maturing variety with a compact, somewhat open growth habit. Totem had a dense growth habit and was the latest maturing of the three. Patio Choice Yellow was as early as Cherry Falls, with larger fruit, and higher yield. Overall, the results offer the home gardener valuable information to help determine what varieties to grow in Northern Colorado.

| Variety Yield Results (ounces)     |              |                     |        |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------|
| Harvest Date                       | Cherry Falls | Patio Choice Yellow | Totem* |
| 8/10                               | 16.9         | 25.6                | 2.2    |
| 8/17                               | 90.0         | 95.2                | 18.8   |
| 8/24                               | 49.0         | 175.1               | 62.6   |
| 8/31                               | 49.0         | 195.0               | 60.0   |
| 9/7                                | 15.0         | 108.4               | 88.4   |
| 9/14                               | 11.0         | 39.3                | 60.4   |
| 9/21                               | 2.4          | 11.9                | 39.4   |
| Average fruit size (ounces)        | 0.3          | 0.6                 | 0.2    |
| Variety Harvest Totals (pounds)    |              |                     |        |
| Total harvested fruit (pounds)     | 15.7         | 40.7                | 20.7   |
| Average harvest per plant (pounds) | 3.1          | 8.1                 | 5.1    |

\*Yield based on four plants