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Tomato Trials

It won't be long! Tomato season is (just about!) upon us!!

One of the projects that Kansas Master Gardeners do on an annual basis is evaluate tomato varieties. They do so by taking measurements like average fruit size in ounces, fruit per plant, and the pounds of tomatoes that are produced per plant.

These varieties are also shared with University of Missouri Extension Horticulture Agent Tom Fowler, who is located in their Buchanan County (St. Joseph) Office. I've seen his trial and it is impressive! In addition to the varieties supplied from Kansas, Tom and his crew of Master Gardeners add some of their own.

The Kansas results are coming soon, but the combined 2015 and 2016 (two tough years in NW Missouri!) results from the Missouri trials are ready for publishing! The complete results are available from your District Office or by e-mailing me at dhallaue@ksu.edu . The results from some of our common varieties are pretty interesting!

The variety Celebrity has been fairly common over the years. It produced just under nine pounds of tomatoes per plant in two years in the MU trial. That easily puts it in the top 25% of producing varieties on a pounds per plant basis. The winner from the Buchanan County trial was our old standby JetStar with a yield of over 11 pounds of tomatoes per plant!

What was your top tomato variety in 2016? We don't have as much information as these trials provide, but it's always interesting to hear what others are planting! If you are willing to share, I'll accept one 'nomination' per person for your favorite 2016 tomato variety. If you can send a short e-mail (three sentence or less!) to dhallaue@ksu.edu noting the variety name and a short description about why it was your favorite, I'll compile (anonymously!) the list and we'll share it on the Meadowlark Extension District Facebook page. Entries are due February 15th!