



**Kevin Milaeger**

*Milaeger's*

**The Tomato Polls are Closed,  
the Winner is.....**

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**Tomatomania 2016 is now past us**, and it was great success. It's pretty much a party atmosphere. With an abundant supply of tomatoes, and perfect weather that day, it was hard not to enjoy yourself. The main goal of Tomatomania is to have our guests taste as many tomato varieties as possible, and vote on their favorites. We have them grouped by class---cherry, paste, novelty, and so on---so if you were only interested in one or two classes, you could do that. We always hope for a lot of people voting, since we use the results to determine what we will grow in future years. But we'll take what we get.

'Tomatoberry' was this year's surprise winner. We've been offering it for about five years, but until now it has not performed well in the taste test. It is a sweet cherry tomato that is crack resistant, but its most interesting feature is a tapered tip, rather like a strawberry. Cherry and grape tomatoes, with their high sugar



**tomato tasting**



content, are always top vote-getters in this competition. Other tiny tomatoes way up on this year's results are 'Rapunzel,' a prolific red cherry, 'Sun Sugar,' an orangey cherry---always popular, 'Nova,' an orangey-yellow grape tomato, and the perennial favorite, 'Husky Cherry Red.'



**Tomatoberry**

sugar content than the red ones, and sweetness always wins in a taste contest. Also near the top is 'Brandy Boy,' one of my favorites. 'Chef's Choice Pink' is a newcomer that also did well. We have this one in our trial garden and it produced numerous large fruit with fantastic flavor. You'll find plants on our lot next spring.

Since many gardeners grow their tomatoes in containers, we decided to put "container friendly" types in their own category a few years ago. These are shorter growing varieties, so they are easier to manage. It's no surprise that 'Husky Cherry Red' was in first place, as it has been for many years. This is not a true cherry, more like a golf ball in size. In second place was 'Celebrity,' which is a big seller for us in spring. It's a reliable performer, with good disease resistance, and prolific, too. Also noteworthy in this category is 'Big League,' a new, disease resistant hybrid that scored well.



**Chef's Choice Pink**

Once avid tomato growers have planted their favorites, they often start looking for something "a little different," always searching for something interesting. We offer many



**Beauty King**

kinds that we classify as "novelty" varieties, that are sure to pique your interest. We divided them into three groups: "black, purple, and green," "orange and yellow," and the beautiful "bicolors." In the first category, 'Green Zebra' was number one. It is a fairly small tomato, about 2-2.5" wide. Its color is apple green, streaked with yellow when ripe. It has a pleasant, tangy flavor. 'Paul Robeson,' a so-called "black" variety, came in second. We've grown it for at least five years, but this is probably the highest it has scored at our event. There were five other black varieties at the tasting, and I think they are all good. Compared to regular red tomatoes, they have a more mellow character. In the novelty bicolors, a new one led the way---'Beauty King.' It is a large tomato, yellow with red streaks. Being mostly yellow, its flavor is fairly mild, yet more distinctive than most yellow tomatoes. It's also prolific.

We enjoy analyzing the Tomatomania taste test results (by [category](#), or [overall](#)), but we know they are less than 100% accurate. For example, while we try to have plenty of every variety available on the day of the event, we always run out of some types, skewing the polling data. Also, with the thousands of tomatoes consumed at the event, there are always some that might be a little under ripe, or over ripe, also skewing the results. It's mainly about fun anyway---and I know everyone had a great time.



