

Ferretti discusses promising tomato varieties

HERSHEY — Most of the tomato varieties which appear to offer great promise for the 1980's will be for fresh market uses, some for processing and a few may be acceptable for both purposes, said Peter Ferretti of Penn State's Dept. of Horticulture.

Many of the fresh market types can be termed multipurpose because they are equally acceptable for greenwraps, pinks or red ripers, he said.

The first successful firm, large-fruited, small-vined tomato variety for fresh market use is Pik-Red (formerly Red Pak). It should be grown only on plastic mulch for early crops of pinks and red-ripers. It was the first major tomato variety to show a large response to plastic mulch. The newer varieties, Count, Duke, and Freedom also appear responsive to plastic mulching.

Jet Star is included primarily for comparative purposes. It has soft fruit when compared to Pik-Red. However, in tests under heavy stresses, it was the most productive all season.

Baron has a smaller vine and is as early as Jet Star. It is a heavy producer of jointless, firm, good flavored, large fruits, and may be used for a machine harvest process type. A good Early Blight spray program is needed when growing this variety.

Early Bush 76 is similar to Baron but has a vine about twice as large (still a small, determinate vine), and has jointed fruit which are firmer. It is a multi-purpose, non-machine harvest fresh market variety.

In tests last year, Count was probably the best-performing tomato variety. Using the Agway Penetrometer test, it was as firm as Floradade even after eleven and fifteen days after picking. It is a highly productive, multi-purpose variety for all fresh uses and possibly processing, since it is jointless and maintains its firmness.

Duke has larger fruits than any of the other new, jointless varieties. The fruit is quite firm and the vine is smaller than Count but larger than Baron or Early Bush. It was also an impressive producer on black plastic mulch last season under wet conditions. Fruit flavor is especially good. Because of the very large fruit size, cat-facing could be more severe under poor growing conditions, said Ferretti.

Freedom has a somewhat larger vine than Count but still is determinate and fairly compact when compared to older varieties. It is jointless and quite productive both unmulched and on black plastic mulch. It appears to ripen

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Five tomato growers aimed their management problems and profit-schemes during Tuesday's vegetable conference. Pictured from left are Keith Eckel and Richard Pallman, growers, Lackawanna Co.; James

Kohi, Jr., Asst. Farm Manager, Furman Canning Co., Northumberland Co.; Leroy Funk, grower, Lancaster Co.; Paul Goodwin, grower, Erie Co.

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