

# Small-Fruited Tomatoes Under Plastic at Sunscape Farms

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## Pros of Growing Small Tomatoes Under Plastic

- Fun and easy to grow compared to large-fruited varieties
- People love them
- Versatile: you can find a variety to suit almost any taste or market
- Low-tech beginner crop with comparatively minimal inputs
- High enough profit potential to justify protected culture

## Cons of Growing Small Tomatoes Under Plastic

- High labor cost and/or lack of skilled labor to perform specific tasks
- Other crops may be more profitable
- Local retail demand may not be present
- Low wholesale market prices
- Protected culture crops need constant attention

## Cost Estimates and Analysis

Our analysis is based on 2000 square feet under plastic with a plant population of 350 plants. Labor, crop value, and profit potential are all based on the Rochester area.

| Estimated Input                               | Cost                             |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Growing Media                                 | \$660                            |
| Plastic Grow Bags                             | \$125                            |
| Irrigation                                    | \$32                             |
| Stakes & Twine                                | \$90                             |
| Fertilizer & Spray                            | \$75 - \$110                     |
| Heat (natural gas)                            | \$200 - \$500                    |
| Labor (fill bags, stake, prune, and maintain) | \$300                            |
| Labor (harvesting)                            | \$2100                           |
| Beneficial Insects, Including Bees            | \$145                            |
| <b>Estimated Total Input Cost:</b>            | <b>\$3727 - \$4062</b>           |
| <b>Estimated Maximum Retail Value:</b>        | <b>\$13,125 (at \$2.50/pint)</b> |
| <b>Estimated Maximum Wholesale Value:</b>     | <b>\$6,562 (at \$1.25/pint)</b>  |

## Ways to Reduce Input Costs

- Perform the labor yourself
- Reduce heat
- Reuse growing media and grow bags for another crop, such as cucumbers or fall greens

## The Take Home

- Don't grow high value crops under cover without supplemental heat
- Don't grow crops that you do not have a market for
- Make the crops work for you and your markets
- Look for ways to make it easy on yourself

Thanks for reading! Further questions or comments: [Nate@sunscapefarms.com](mailto:Nate@sunscapefarms.com)