

Terrific Tomato Tips



The key to success with tomatoes is lots of sunshine and lots of heat. Your soil should be rich and well drained. Add lots of organic material such as Soil Booster or compost to the soil every year before planting.

Types of Tomatoes

Determinate: (don't prune). These are bushy, fairly short and grow to a certain point and then stop. These types of tomatoes set all their fruit at once (good for canning). They require more space in a garden and grow well in a cage.

Indeterminate: These are tall tomatoes and require sturdy staking or a trellis. They keep growing and require regular pruning for higher yields and larger fruit. The side shoots are pruned to keep growth restricted to the main stem.

Semi Determinate: This is a third type of tomato that grows well in cages or can be staked. They grow upright like indeterminate types but are bushier than regular indeterminate types. They have thick sturdy stems and crinkled dark green foliage.

Planting

When planting, bury tomato plants slightly deeper than they come in the pot, about 2-4". Tomatoes are able to develop roots all along their stems, so planting deeper encourages strong root growth.

Remove Bottom Leaves

Once the tomato plants are about 3' tall, remove the leaves from the bottom 12" of stem. These are usually the first leaves to develop fungus problems. They get the least amount of sun and soil born pathogens can be unintentionally splashed up onto them.

Pinch & Prune

Pinch and remove suckers that develop in the crotch joint of two branches. They won't bear fruit and will take energy away from the rest of the plant. But go easy on pruning the rest of the plant. You can thin leaves to allow the sun to reach the ripening fruit, but it's the leaves that are photosynthesizing and creating the sugars that give flavor to your tomatoes.



Water Regularly

Water deep and regularly while the plants are developing. Irregular watering, (missing a week and trying to make up for it), leads to blossom end rot and cracking. Once the fruit begins to ripen, lessening the water will coax the plant into concentrating its sugars. Don't withhold water so much that the plants wilt and become stressed or they will drop their blossoms and possibly their fruit.



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Fertilizing

Tomatoes are exceptionally heavy feeders, and for the best harvest, you should ensure you feed them often. Here are a few options:

Slow Release Fertilizer

This granular fertilizer can be incorporated into the soil prior to planting. An excellent choice for gardeners who prefer a low maintenance feeding schedule. Keep in mind that slow release will not suffice to keep tomatoes well fed on its own; once a week, water plants with a water soluble fertilizer. Off The Vine Organic Fertilizer is a great choice.

Water Soluble Fertilizer

Choose a fertilizer high in phosphorous and potassium (these are represented by the middle and last numbers on the label). We recommend Earth Safe Tomato Food (2-1-3).

Harvesting Tomatoes

Harvest tomatoes when fruit is still slightly firm and fruit has almost reached it's colour peak. Firm fruit will last much longer than fruit picked when soft. Always try to keep a bit of stem attached.

If frost threatens, plants can be moved into the garage; foliage may curl and discolour, but fruit will continue to ripen slightly on plants. If fruit must be picked green, place tomatoes in shallow flats between layers of newspaper. Green fruit ripens best in dark areas.

Top Tomatoes

There are endless varieties of tomatoes available. Here is a listing of some of our favourites:

Paste Tomatoes

Roma
Health Kick

Determinate Tomatoes

Better Boy
Bush Beefsteak
Celebrity
Early Girl
Manitoba
Northern Exposure
Patio
Sub Arctic Plenty

Indeterminate

Big Beef
Beefmaster
Early Cascade
Lemon Boy

Cherry/Grape Tomatoes

Juliet
Sugar Snack
Sweet One Hundred
Tiny Tim
Tumbler



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