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TOMATO GUIDE



The tomato is probably the most popular vegetable grown today, growing anywhere there is six to eight hours of sunlight daily. Vine ripened tomatoes from the garden are far superior in taste to those purchased from the market. Commercially grown tomatoes are developed for their firm skin and uniform shape rather than for taste.

VARIETY SELECTION

Variety selection is based upon your region, your taste, and also upon the types of tomatoes you prefer. You may choose larger varieties for slicing, cherry types for salads, pear types for paste and canning, or golden types for their different color and low acidity. Select varieties with different maturity dates to extend the tomato harvest. It is also important to look for disease resistant varieties. The letters V, F, N, T, and A after variety names stand for resistance or tolerance to the more common tomato problems:

V - Verticillium wilt F - Fusarium wilt N - Nematodes
T - Tobacco mosaic A - Alternaria

Tomato varieties are either determinate or indeterminate. The terminal buds set fruit and the stem is self-topping in a determinate or bush variety. It requires little or no support. Harvest is generally short with much of the fruit maturing about the same time over the entire plant. Indeterminate or climbing varieties produce leaves and more stem from the growing tip, growing indefinitely. The blossoms and fruit develop progressively, so harvest continues over a long period of time. Indeterminate plants need support and pruning.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

VARIETY	TYPE	MATURITY
BEEFMASTER VFN	I	80 DAYS
BETTER BOY VFN	I	70 DAYS
BIG BOY	I	78 DAYS
CELEBRITY VFNTA	D	72 DAYS
EARLY GIRL VF	I	52 DAYS
HEARTLAND VFN	I	68 DAYS
JETSTAR VF	I	72 DAYS
JUBILEE	I	80 DAYS
MARGLOBE VF	D	75 DAYS
ROMA VFN	D	76 DAYS
RUTGERS	D	82 DAYS
SUPERSONIC VF	D	79 DAYS
SWEET 100 (cherry)	I	65 DAYS

I - Indeterminate D - Determinate

SOIL

Tomatoes grow best in well-drained garden soil that is rich in organic matter. They prefer soil with a pH between 6.0 and 7.0. Soil testing is essential to determine the pH. Sulfur can be used to decrease the pH level if soils are too alkaline. If soils are too acidic, lime may be added to increase pH.

PLANTING

Set plants deeply in the soil to develop strong root systems. Be sure to remove any lower leaves which may be buried. Space 2 feet apart with rows 3 feet apart. When planting tomatoes, it is recommended that you follow a crop rotation system to cut down on soil-borne disease. In other words, tomatoes should not be grown in the same garden spot year after year, allowing at least a one year interval between tomato crops.

FERTILIZER

Use a complete garden fertilizer when planting; then apply at three week intervals. A side dressing of high potassium fertilizer is good for tomatoes, as well as for any of the yellow bloom vegetables. This is applied when the first blooms appear.

NOTE: FERTILIZER FORMULATIONS, SUCH AS 10-10-10, REFER TO THE PERCENTAGE OF NITROGEN (N), PHOSPHOROUS (P), AND POTASSIUM (K), IN THAT ORDER IN THE FERTILIZER.



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one flower at a time.***