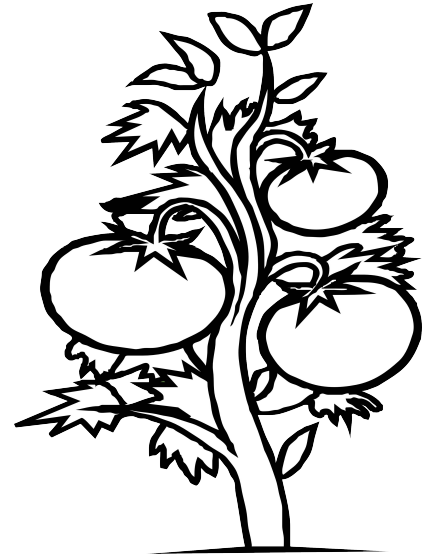




Tomato Guide

Heirloom versus Modern Hybrids

Heirloom tomato varieties are said to have superior flavor compared to modern hybrid tomato varieties, but they may be more susceptible to disease issues. Breeding for disease control is one of the characteristics breeders strive for when creating hybrids. Regardless of which types you decide to grow, the garden-to-table fruits have far better flavor compared to grocery store tomatoes. Those have to be harvested before the peak of ripeness, plus they may be bred for long shelf life therefore sacrificing flavor.



What is an Heirloom tomato?

Heirloom tomatoes are open-pollinated seeds passed down from generation to generation. The seeds from heirloom tomatoes will produce identical plants to the parent plant.

What is a Hybrid tomato?

Hybrids are crosses of different varieties to achieve ideal traits from each variety. They will not grow true to variety from seed. You can save seed and give it a try, but the results are unpredictable and may not resemble the hybrid you originally grew.

Disease resistance

Hybrid varieties have been bred for disease resistance. Plant tags will list letter coding to communicate what issue that particular variety shows a resistance against. Letters V,F,N,T and A is usually at the beginning of the copy description.

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

Determinate vs Indeterminate vines

Also important to note – Is the tomato vine determinate (DET) or indeterminate (IND)? Determinate tomatoes will produce a crop that ripens within a week or two, then they are done. These types are good for canning purposes, while indeterminate tomatoes will produce over several weeks until a late frost kills the vines. These are good for eating fresh or adding to dishes. Indeterminate vines may need support stakes and even a little pruning. This identification is usually listed on the plant tags as well.

To plant -

After the last frost date, (usually around May 15th here in Ohio), plant tomatoes in a full sun location (6 hours minimum) with rich organic soil. Poor soil conditions can lead to poor fruit production or poor quality fruit susceptible to cracking and other issues. Mix in compost and/or organic peat to help enrich poor soil conditions.

Space plants two to three feet apart, so they have plenty of room for air circulation and harvesting. It is also recommended that you rotate planting sites for tomatoes to help cut down on soil-borne diseases that could overwinter. Meaning, don't plant tomatoes in the same spot each year.

Watering -

Water regularly to keep soil evenly moist, especially once the vines have set fruit. Adequate moisture will also cut down on cracking and blossom end rot.

Fertilizing -

Tomatoes are heavy feeders. Add fertilizer such as Espoma Organic® Tomato-Tone® 3-4-6, at a rate of 3 tablespoons per plant every 2-3 weeks.

Planting in pots

If space is limited, you can grow tomatoes in pots. A container 18 inches in diameter with drainage holes is ideal. You will need to water more frequently as containers dry out quicker than if they were planted in the ground. Add Tomato-Tone® fertilizer at a rate of 3 tablespoons per plant every 2-3 weeks.

Some of the most popular Heirloom Varieties –

Boxcar Willie

Brandywine Pink, Yellow

Jubilee

Kellogg's Breakfast

Marglobe

Mortgage Lifter

Oxheart

Pineapple

Rainbow Blend

San Marzano

Yellow Pear