TOMATOES

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In The Home Garden

• Anatomy of a Tomato Plant •

DETERMINATE TYPE
- Terminal bud do not set fruit
- Stop stem growth - plant self-topping
- Bush type, seldom needs staking
- All blossoms and fruit develop on plant about same time

INDETERMINATE TYPE
- Terminal bud do not set fruit
- Plant continues to grow producing more leaves and stems
- Blossoms and fruit develop progressively as plant grows
- Staking type

HYBRID TYPE
- Seed produced by a land pollinated cross between two distinct parent lines
- Producing extreme vigor, uniform growth, more disease resistant

STANDARD TYPE
- Open pollinated - recommended by its performance for size, colour, growth and resistance

POLLINATION
Tomatoes are self-pollinating. Plants contain both male and female parts on same plant. To set fruit, pollen has to be mixed. Movement by wind or physical shaking is all that's necessary.

FRUIT SET
Fruit sets within a narrow temperature range of 16° C to 21° C night temperature. Too hot or too cold, plant fails to produce necessary hormones for fruit to set.
Growth regulator such as Blossom Set supplies the tomato flower with hormones to help plant set fruit.

DISEASE RESISTANCE
Many varieties will have letters such as "V" - "F" - "N" beside their names. This indicates plant is resistant to: V - Verticillium Wilt, F - Fusarium Wilt, N - Nematodes.

• How and Where to Plant •

TIME Once last chance of severe frost has passed. To protect against frost, use HOTKAPS or plastic jugs.

HOTKAPS This commercially available paper protection has a vent for air circulation and a cuff you fill with soil to hold it firmly in place.

LOCATION
Good air movement with about 8 hours of daily sunlight.

SOIL
Rich organic soil with good water and air holding capacity. Annual enrichment with peat moss or composted manure very important.
Soil should never dry out.

PLANTING Tomatoes will transplant easier with less shock if planted deeper.

PLANT IT DEEP Put a good stocky plant in so the first leaf is just above the soil. Leggy plants should be buried very deep. Pull off a few leaves and to make planting easier, bend the stem and lay it in sideways. Roots will develop all along the buried stem.

FERTILIZERS At time of transplanting, soak each hole with a cup or so of high-phosphorus starter solution. No additional fertilizer will be needed until after blossom when fruit starts to form, using STERN'S TOMATO or PLANT PROD TOMATO FERTILIZER every two weeks during growing season. Application of either one of these fertilizers will assure optimum fruit with the addition of all required trace elements. These trace elements are very important for fruit ripening resistance to cracking and blossom rot.

WATERING Moisture is the single most important factor in growing tomatoes. Maintaining an even, continuous supply is essential. Frequency of watering depends on stage of growth, temperature, humidity and the type of soil.

MULCHING

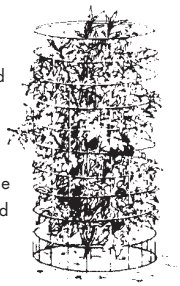
One of the best is a black plastic film. The single most important reason for using a mulch is to control the moisture level of the soil by reducing the evaporation rate.

PRUNING

Pruning is necessary to control the negative growth of the plant and to permit sufficient sunlight for sizing and ripening the fruit.

TRAINING

The bush type do not require staking. However, a straw mulch around the plant reduces bottom rot and disease. Staking type should have a stake or cage support for proper growth and ripening.



A TALL CAGE is a very good way to support viney indeterminates or strong determinates without tying. Keep the plant pinched inside the cage until it grows up and over the cage.

• Pests and Diseases •

Tomatoes are susceptible to many pests and diseases due mainly to poor growing conditions and poor housekeeping.

BLOSSOM-END ROT

Black leathery scar or rot on blossom-end of fruit. Usually caused by poor watering practice or sudden change in moisture level.

BLOSSOM DROP

Poor pollination caused by too cool or too hot of temperature.

FRUIT CRACKS

Can be caused by rapid change in soil moisture or exposure to too much sun. Try using some of the crack-resistant varieties.

SUNSCALD

White or yellow patch appears on green fruit turning to paper-like tissue. Caused by sun exposure on young fruit.

CUT WORMS

Insects hide in soil, during night feed on young transplants. Use Diazinon when planting.

TOMATO FRUITWORM

Eats into the fruit. Control when insects are small with Sevin.

EARLY BLIGHT

Spots looking like "bull's eye" appear on foliage and fruit. Control with Maneb, Zineb or Captan.

LATE BLIGHT

Greasy, black areas on leaves. Green and ripe fruit get corky brown on surface. Control with Captan and Maneb.