

Tomato Talk

Tomato Types

Indeterminate - grows and produces fruit until frost.

Determinate - Sets all fruit within a few weeks. This is an advantage if the tomatoes are being grown for canning.

Heirlooms - Older varieties

Hybrids - have been bred for flavor, disease resistance, longer keeping and productivity.



Growing Tips

1. Due to the long growing season required by tomatoes, tomatoes are usually set out as transplants in Ohio gardens after the frost free day of May 20th.
2. Plant deep. Roots will grow from any stem in the soil. A better root system will help the plant to tolerate heat and drought.
3. Good Soil. Amend your soil with high quality compost.
4. Lots of sun, at least 6 hours of full sun
5. Mulch. Mulch prevents weeds and helps keep the soil evenly moist. If the soil becomes too dry, blossom-end rot can occur. If too much water is given to the plants at one time, the fruit may split as they ripen.
6. Do NOT fertilize with any high nitrogen fertilizer. High nitrogen fertilizers will cause the plant to grow large vines with very few fruit. Tomato Tone is a popular product. Tomatoes respond well to phosphorus.
7. Do not overcrowd the plants. Allow 3-4 feet between plants to allow air circulation to prevent disease and fungus. Staking plants also help with air circulation and disease prevention.
8. Do not overwater. It is normal for the leaves to wilt a little in the hot sun of the afternoon. If the plants recover late in the day, the plants do not need water. Water the base of the plant only. Try to keep the leaves dry to prevent disease. However, new plants should be watered regularly until established.

Help for Troubled Tomatoes

1. **Companion planting** can be a benefit by distracting harmful insects away from the tomatoes or help make the plants more resistant to pests.

Nasturtium, geraniums, petunias and zinnias act as trap crops, keeping pests away from the desirable plant or crop. Marigolds produce a chemical that repels many insects.

Tomatoes should not be planted with strawberries, fennel and dill. Strawberries carry the disease Verticillium Wilt. Dill attracts Tomato Horn Worms. Fennel inhibits the growth of many plants.

2. Keep the garden clean. Remove debris and leaf litter. Many harmful diseases and pests live in debris and leaf litter.

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