



Tips for Growing Tomatoes

TOMATO TYPES

There are two types of tomatoes:

Determinant - bushy tomatoes that produce fruit at the same time and do not require training or staking.

In-determinant - tall vines that fruit in succession and require support such as staking.

PLANTING POSITION

Plant in a sunny position, with at least 6 hours of sun, after the risk of frost has passed.

SOIL

Tomatoes grow best in a compost rich soil, with added manure and 2 tablespoons of potash per plant. The soil pH should be at between 6.5 - 6.7.

To help prevent Blossom End Rot (where the bottom of the tomato appears brown and rotted) add calcium to the soil by sprinkling lime and/or adding crushed egg shells to the bottom of the planting hole.

AT PLANTING

Space plants about one metre apart. Dig a hole deep enough to cover the stem right up to the lowest leaves, to encourage root growth right up to this point, which makes the plant nice and strong.

WATERING

Water newly planted seedlings well with a tonic, such as seaweed or worm wee tea.

Tomatoes prefer the soil to be consistently moist, but not saturated. To achieve this, cover the soil with a layer of mulch (e.g. straw) and monitor the soil to assess the moisture and need to water. Water deeply once a day (morning is best) and fertilise fortnightly.

Tomatoes benefit from watering at the base of the plant, taking care to avoid wetting the leaves. This helps to prevent powdery mildew. If your tomato plants are affected by powdery mildew, remove and bin the affected leaves.

STAKING TOMATOES

Tomatoes do best when supported up off the ground to provide good air flow and prevent disease and fruit rot.

Position the stake at time of planting to avoid damaging roots later on. Tie growing stems to stakes with twine.

PRUNING

Remove leaves that are in contact with the ground to reduce the risk of pests and diseases.

Pinch off the lateral stems (these appear between the branch and main stem) to encourage the plant to put more effort into growing fruit and less into growing leaves. This also keeps the plant open, allowing air movement (reducing the risk of pest and disease) and sunlight (increasing fruit ripening).

REDUCING THE RISK OF PESTS & DISEASE

Rotate your crops to help reduce the risk of pests and diseases for your tomatoes, avoid planting tomatoes in a patch where tomatoes, chillies, eggplants or potatoes have been in the last two years. Remove any diseased leaves or fruit as you find them and put them into the bin.

PLANTING TOMATOES IN POTS

Plant one tomato plant per large pot or container with drainage holes in the bottom. Fill with well draining, compost and manure rich soil or potting mix. Place the pot in a sunny position and ensure it does not dry out.

HARVESTING YOUR TOMATO CROP

The best place to store your harvested tomatoes is on the bench, not in the fridge as this destroys their structure and flavour.

COMPANION PLANTING

Plants that grow well alongside your tomatoes include: basil, beans, oregano, parsley, marigolds, chives, nasturtium, onions, calendula, geranium, borage, lettuce and capsicum.

Plants to avoid growing near your tomatoes include: broccoli, cauliflower, corn, dill, carrots, potato, fennel, and cabbage.

INFORMATION SOURCED THROUGH:

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/> and www.sgaonline.org.au

