



## Tomatoes

Start seed indoors 6 - 8 weeks before transplanting out to the garden. Cover seeds with 1/2 cm (1/4 in) of soil. Firm soil over seed. Keep moist but not waterlogged. To germinate maintain a soil temperature of 24 C (75 F). Seed should germinate in 6 - 10 days. Once seeds have sprouted, 14 - 16 hours of light per day is essential. Once plants have reached 12 cm (5 in) transplant to 6 cm (3 in) peat pots. Place the root ball at the bottom of the pot, filling pot with soil will ensure better root development along the stem. Plants will develop better with a growing temperature of 17 C (62 F) until transplanting out. Fertilize weekly with 10-52-17 and liquid seaweed for strong root development. Do not transplant out till night temperatures are warm.

### Tomato Terms

#### Determinate and Indeterminate

When selecting tomato varieties, you must choose between plants with different types of growth habits called determinate or indeterminate. All tomatoes are either one or the other.

**Determinate** varieties (including bush varieties) reach a certain plant height and then stop growing. The majority of their fruit matures within a month or two and appears at the ends of the branches. These are popular with gardeners who like to can, make sauce, or have another reason for wanting most of their tomatoes at once.

Most determinate varieties need a cage, but there are some very stocky varieties, such as Better Bush, that have a very sturdy main stems; they don't need much support, just a stake to keep them from toppling in wind and rain. Varieties especially suited to growing in pots, such as Patio and Better Bush, are determinate. Little or no pruning is needed.

**Indeterminate** varieties continue to grow and produce tomatoes all along the stems throughout the growing season. Indeterminate plants need extra-tall supports of at least 5 feet. Because indeterminate varieties throw out so many shoots, gardeners often prune them for optimum-sized fruit or train them on a very tall trellis. However, if you don't prune, no harm done!

Most gardeners grow both types, determinate for large harvests for canning and freezing and indeterminate to get fruit for salads and sandwiches throughout the growing season.

A few varieties are called semi-determinate or compact indeterminate because they are somewhere in between. For best results, give them support.

**Heirloom tomato** - Any tomato that is at least fifty years old and is not a hybrid.

**Hybrid tomato** - A tomato bred by crossing varieties. Hybrids offer better disease resistance, higher yield, and other improved traits. Hybrids are **not** genetically engineered (GMO).

What does Epsom salt do for tomato plants?

Epsom salt used as a foliar spray or soil additive will help tomato and pepper plants grow and produce larger, tastier yields. ... Epsom salt is not actually salt but a natural mineral compound of about 10 percent magnesium and about 13 percent sulfur—often referred to as magnesium-sulfate



## TOMATO PLANT PROBLEMS AND HOW TO FIX

If you had any issues with your Tomatoes during this last season, or having any problems now, this info and chart might be helpful. It is important to be able to identify and treat the common Tomato plant ailments that might crop up.

**1- BLOSSOM END ROT:** This is one of the most common ailments, and you can tell if your plants have it by looking at where Tomatoes attach to vine. If the attachment appears brown and leathery between the size of a dime and quarter, than that Tomato has Blossom End Rot.

**TO TREAT:** You will have to take all the Tomatoes off the plants that are affected, and dispose of them. If you don't, it will spread and to all of them. Great product to use when transplanting is "Talk of Tomatoes" - helps prevent this.

**2- BLIGHT:** There are 3 stages of Blight. Early Blight is black and grey spots on the leaves when Tomatoes are young. Southern Blight is black and grey spots by stem and roots of the tomato plant. Late Blight gets out of hand, and is black and grey spots throughout the leaves, vines, and tomatoes. Use a fungicide such as Natria to help prevent.

**TO TREAT:** The easiest way is to treat it in its' early stages by removing the parts of the Tomato plants that are infected.. If you don't notice it until the later stages of Blight, you will need to buy an anti-fungal treatment.

**3- CATERPILLARS:** They love to feed on Tomato plants, and should be taken care of right away.

**TO TREAT:** There are many treatments available to fight against caterpillar infestations such as BTK organic insecticide. You can also plant French Marigolds by your Tomatoes to help deter them from coming around.

**4- FRUIT SPLITTING:** This can occur when it is dry, and then you get some heavy rains, or most frequently when there is sudden growth in the tomato plant. It doesn't hurt the Tomatoes, or affect you eating them, they just don't look good after that.

**TO TREAT:** If it occurs early in the Tomato plants growth phase, it can be reversed. Just water and apply nutrients, as normal, so there's no too dry too wet cycle. If it happens near harvest, it can't be reversed.

**5- RED SPIDER MITES:** They are hard to spot, and usually are under your leaves. If you notice cobwebs on your Tomato plants, then you definitely

have them.

**TO TREAT:** You can use an insecticidal soap spray, or Onion and Garlic spray. Coriander, Dill, and Chrysanthemums are good to plant to deter them.

**6- WILT:** It is a fungal infection that starts in the roots, and blocks most of the water and nutrients from getting to the plant. It usually causes no problems until Tomatoes are growing on the vines. You will first see yellowing and drying of lower leaves, and then whole plant will wilt during hottest period of day. It will recover some at night, but then wilt again next day.

**TO TREAT:** There really is no treatment when you get wilt that I know of. It is in the soil, so the next time you grow Tomatoes, pick a different spot in the Garden to grow them. It will deprive the Wilt of a host, and it will die out over the next year. Grow seedlings inside in clean soil before transplanting in Spring, and then make sure to pull all weeds that pop up around them.

**7- SUN SCORCH:** The skin of your Tomatoes will look bruised and sunken. It sometimes happens when your Tomatoes get too much sun exposure during a real dry and hot period.

**TO TREAT:** Don't do any pruning of leaves during hot periods. The extra leaves will shield the Tomatoes. You can also use shade cloth to cover them during these periods. Once they get Sun Scorch, you cannot do anything for the affected fruit, but you can provide shade for the unaffected ones.

