



Tomato Care Sheet

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Exposure: Full sun is best. But some of us aren't that lucky. The amount of sunlight a tomato variety requires can depend on the variety you choose. A simple rule of thumb is: The larger the tomato the more sunlight it will need. At least 8 to 10 hours. The smaller the fruit, less sunlight hours required. Remember that 6 hours of sunlight is the minimum amount required to produce some fruit.

Organic Soil Amendments: Always amend your soil. Amending the soil helps to break up compacted soils or adds substance to sandy soil. Helps oxygenate, aid in water percolation water retention. Amendments also become nutrients for the **microorganisms** to feed on it is finally decomposed. **Yes**, add your compost. Your fully decomposed compost is excellent as an amendment. I recommend adding no more than 50% compost 50% amendments.

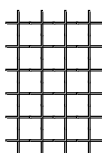


and after



Soil Preparation: Currently I recommend preparing the soil using the "Lasagna method". This is a very easy and less time consuming way to amend your soil. This method first incorporates compost, soil amendments, fertilizer; soil conditioners then till and mix together. Thereafter, this method does not recommend you to ever till the soil again. All Fertilizers, Compost/Casting/Soil Conditioners are "layered" over the planting area. Finally your choice of amendment is used to cover the entire garden. An ample amount of water is used to compact and moisten the soil. You can immediately plant your starts through the layers only removing enough soil to accommodate the new seedling. The idea behind this method is not to disturb the established bio-mass already living in the soil. Tilling disrupts these established communities which will need time to rebuild to become an effective unit.

Organic Potting Soil for Containers: Current organic potting mixes are teaming with everything you need to successfully plant tomatoes in containers. When planting "indeterminate varieties" I suggest using a container or pot that is a minimum 15 gallon standard size nursery container or larger. It should hold a 2 cu.ft.bag of potting soil. Determinate varieties will do fine in a 5 gallon size nursery container or larger. This container should hold just short of 1 cu ft of potting soil. Add Worm Castings, John and Bob's Soil Optimizer and your choice of Organic Fertilizer and mix everything together to complete the potting mix.



Trellis: Indeterminate plants can grow 6, 8 to 20 feet long or more. This means that some sort of support is necessary to keep your vines and tomatoes off the ground. A 2"x2" stake 8' or 10' foot is very effective. Select a heavy mesh wire cage to support larger plants. If you use a wire cage, buy the largest cage available. Determinate plants grow much smaller. A medium sized wire cage is enough for these plants.

Stake the same day you plant! If you come back a week or two later, you may damage the new roots that are growing away from the main root mass. Waiting too long can injure these roots as you push the stake through the root and into the soil.

Fertilizing: Using Organic fertilizers is simple to use. They are extremely important products to supplement soil amendments and compost. Most organic fertilizers are made recycled animal parts and/or plant parts, over application will never be harmful to the soil damage plant roots. Organic fertilizers are slo-release and are a complete source of nutrition that keeps the plant and soil healthy. Most are applied every 30 days up to 180 days. Make sure you read the applications rates on each label you use.



from or



Soil Conditioners: John and Bob's Soil Optimizer is a Humic Acid product that create sustainable life in the soil. It's the third part of the soil chain often overlooked to create true bio-mass sustainability as it feeds the beneficial bacteria in the soil. These highly active beneficial bacteria provide complete nutrient availability to your plant. This complete nutrition availability provides your plant with the ability resist insect and disease pressures and from hot and cold temperature stress. Starches/sugars are the results of this interaction and flow throughout the vascular

system of the plant and end up in the fruit you are harvesting. Ever wonder why vine ripen is so sweet? A side benefit of Humic Acid is its ability stimulates the plant to create sugars as food which is eventually forms in the fruit. AS a soil conditioner it will permanently change the tilth of clay or sandy soil over time.

Watering: How much? How Often? I found that a deep watering at intervals is the best way to water. A rule of thumb is to: deep water once every 7 day for the first 4 weeks. Watch the foliage in the coolest part of the morning after sunrise and check to see if the foliage is drooping. If the foliage is drooping in the cool morning air, then that's the best time to water. Do not be fooled by a plant's foliage drooping as needing water. This is natural when the foliage is drooping in the mid morning or afternoon heat. Deep watering is key. A slow drip from the hose for at least 45 minutes is advised. Apply water again when the foliage is drooping only in the cool early morning. Count the intervals between waterings. That will determine your interval. You will know about when the plant will need water again.



DISEASES: Most Heirloom Tomato varieties generally have poor however, disease is not usually a problem until mid-season. Plant varieties for a sustained harvest. Leaf blight diseases such as alternaria begin to appear about mid-April, and are more fruit production begins. To reduce disease problems, use disease tolerant varieties and use organic sprays. Fusarium wilt (race 1), a soil fungus is common when soil temperatures approach 60 degrees. Fusarium races 1 and 2 are present in southern areas. Where Fusarium wilt is present. The use of resistant varieties is recommended. But remember that these varieties are not a complete cure for the problem. They will succumb to the disease later in the season. Compost teas have recently been quite effective in combating soil and leaf fungus, insect while aiding the plants by gathering nutrients and conditioning the soil. Blossom-end rot (a hard dark patch that develops at the blossom end of the fruit) is prevented by ensuring an adequate level of soil calcium, and steady moisture. Temperature is usually a major factor of the cause of Blossom End Rot. When soil temperatures rise, calcium locked up in the soil is released usually solving this problem organically.



disease resistance;
disease-resistant
early blight and
susceptible once
resistant or
disease caused by a

.PESTS: Aphids, White flies, mites and Little Green Worms (Loopers) are common invaders on our plants. Spray with a fast jet of water or use organic products containing Spinosad or herb oils such as garlic, cinnamon, thyme, clove or citrus. Using organic fertilizers aid in repelling invaders that are sizing your tomato plants for dinner.



Tomato hornworms can best controlled by just picking them off your plant with a pair of tongs but best spray first then hand controlled. Hornworms with the white egg cases of parasitic wasps should not be destroyed because the wasps will hatch out and destroy other hornworms in the garden. Organic controls such as Spinosad or B.T. are safe for people but deadly for insects.

FLAVOR: Complete plant nutrition has a great effect on how a tomato tastes. Plant stress such as insect or disease pressures, adverse weather lead to "off flavors". Avoid placing freshly harvested tomatoes in the refrigerator. Refrigeration will destroy much of the delicate flavor by turning the sugar to starch. Tomatoes are best stored at a temperature above 50 deg. F (10 deg. C) to maximize vine ripen tomato flavors. It's also best to watch your cultural practices. Over watering is a common mistake that leads to "Watery Tasting Fruit" Liquids dilutes the sugars in the plants vascular system making them bland. A rule of thumb is to harvest your fruit 24 to 48 hours after watering. This allows a more concentrated stream of sugars to be stored in the fruit which will then be trapped when you harvest it.



ACIDITY: Many ask which tomatoes are low acid. Yellow and white tomatoes are assumed to be low acid. Alas this rumor is false. There is no such thing as a low acid tomato. Yellow and White varieties have the same acid ph as red, pink and black varieties but have a higher sugar content that masks the

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