

The Art of Growing Tomatoes

Tips and tricks to growing the best tomatoes



Growing tomatoes has been a source of necessity for decades. Recently, more gardeners are learning that growing their own tomatoes is a way of having high-quality produce just outside their door, and they don't have to worry about how it was grown. While tomatoes are a common plant to grow, there is at times some difficulty in growing healthy, abundant plants.

When, Where, How

Tomatoes are a warm-season crop, which means they grow in warm temperatures. All threat of frost needs to be gone before they should be planted outside. Typically, late May is a good time to start planting through early June. Tomatoes should be planted in locations that will receive more than 6 hours of sunlight and in locations that have well-draining soil. When preparing the soil, adding compost to your garden helps add organic matter, which aids in nutrient retention and drainage. Tomatoes should be planted past their bottom set of leaves, as roots will form along the stem. So, dig the hole deep to allow for this. Add a tablespoon of bone meal to the bottom of the hole to add calcium and prevent blossom-end rot.

Water and Fertilize

After planting, water them well to maintain constant moisture and prevent wilting. As the season progresses, allow the tomatoes to dry slightly between waterings. On days that require water, do so in the mornings to allow plants to be dry before evening to prevent disease formation. Fertilize with either Jack's Classic Tomato FeEd or Tomato Maker to keep your plants healthy and producing abundant fruit. These water-soluble fertilizers should be applied every other week.

Disease control, harvest and storage

Unfortunately, disease and disorders can be common with tomatoes. Blight and blossom end rot are our two most common. To prevent blight, applications of Copper Fungicide or Fertilome Broad Spectrum Fungicide can help by applying every 10 days; however, you should start applications before disease is present, typically late May. Apply Fertilome to prevent blossom end rot in late June by spraying the foliage weekly.

Tomatoes are harvested when they are firm and a deep mature color. It is best to allow fruit to harvest on the plant. After harvesting, store in a cool place to keep as long as possible. Avoid storing in the refrigerator as the flavor will diminish.

