

Ten Steps to Your Best Tomato Year Yet

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Ten Tips & Tricks:

1. Buy starts in mid-spring, but keep in pots until the weather warms. Pot up to gallon size, keep well-watered.
2. Harden-off for 4-6 days before planting out in the garden.
3. Prepare bed with plenty of compost.
4. Plant deeply with fertilizer, sinking some stem and pinching leaves to take advantage of “adventitious rooting.”
5. Protect with a cloche or Wall o’ Water for first few weeks outdoors.
6. Water regularly and deeply.
7. Prune bottom foot of branches off to prevent disease spread.
8. As weather warms, open cloche daily to wean plants to wind and cooler night temperatures. After a week, remove cloche.
9. Use trellis or tomato ladder (sturdy cage) to support vines.
10. Prune to a few main leaders; prune suckers through summer.



Suggested Tomato Varieties:

Note: Not an exhaustive list, just some favorites!

Two types:

- Determinate: (“det.”) bush type plants, fruit ripens at once.
- Indeterminate: (“ind.”) vining plants, many shoots, continuous fruiting.

Cherries:

Yellow Pear, Red Fig, Sweet Million, Sungold, Red Grape, Peacevine, Chadwick’s, Plum

Extra early:

Stupice (ind., salad, heirloom, Czech origin, potato-leaf)

Oregon Spring (det., slicing)

Early Girl (ind., slicing)

Black Prince (ind., slicing)

Glacier (det., salad)

Also: many with black or purple in their names are excellent for shorter seasons

Also: many from Russia like Moskovich and Cosmonaut Volkov

Sauce:

Principe Borghese (det., heirloom); Roma (det.); San Marzano (ind., heirloom); Amish Paste (ind., heirloom, longer season)

Odd colored:

Green Zebra (ind., salad, heirloom, bred from an old English variety, salad, prolific)

Mr. Stripey (ind., salad, similar to Green Zebra)

Black Krim (ind., slicing, heirloom, winey flavor)

Cherokee Purple (ind., slicing)

Taxi (det., salad, yellow, of course)

Jaune Flamme (ind., salad, heirloom, apricot color)

Silvery Fir Tree (det., salad, unique foliage, red fruit, great for pots)

Main season (longer time to harvest):

Costoluto Genovese (ind., slicing, heirloom, billowy accordion, rich, juicy)

Celebrity (det., beefsteak)

Mortgage Lifter (ind., beefsteak)

Brandywine (ind., beefsteak, many strains)

Pests:

- Slugs and snails
 - Handpick and destroy
 - Use copper barriers
- Flea beetles - small dark beetles that jump like fleas, cause round holes in leaves
 - floating row cover, catch on sticky sheet, spray with neem oil
- Tomato hornworms – white striped, green caterpillar
 - Handpick and destroy
 - Plant dill near tomatoes to attract it
- Aphids – tiny white or black, usually seen as a mass, cause shriveled leaves
 - Wash off with water spray
 - Wait for ladybugs to take care of them
- Spider mites – tiny red specks, underside of leaves, cause yellow speckling
 - Wash off with water spray

Diseases:

- Late blight: Very common in maritime gardens. Plant stops growing, leaves and branches wither, turn brown, may rot. Caused by *Phytophthora infestans*, a fungus-like organism; spreads fast on wet leaves and stems. To prevent it, avoid overhead watering and prune for air circulation. Prune off and destroy affected plant material; do not home compost it.
- Blossom end rot: Somewhat common tomato disease. Brown rot is seen spreading from blossom end (bottom) of fruit. Caused by various bacteria and fungi; can come on with irregular watering or badly draining soil. Plants with calcium deficiency are most susceptible; treat with bone meal. Cut affected part off tomato when eating; might not affect other fruit.