

## Tomato *Solanum lycopersicum*

According to a recent gardeners' survey, the tomato is the number one vegetable choice for backyard growing. Heirloom tomatoes, which come in all sizes of red, purple, green, yellow, and even stripes, are especially popular. Most gardeners opt to grow several varieties for a cornucopia of mouth-watering tastes.

**TIP** — Tomatoes *can* be successfully grown in pots. You'll need a container that holds at least 5 gallons; bigger is even better. Choose a determinate variety, such as 'Oregon Spring' or 'Roma', and add plenty of compost to your soil mix for moisture retention.

**Location and soil** Grow tomatoes in full sun. Soil should be well drained and high in organic matter. Leave sufficient space between plants to ensure that air can circulate freely once plants grow to full size.

**When to Plant** Sow seed indoors about 6 weeks prior to your outdoor planting date, and set transplants out about two weeks after the last spring frost, when soil has warmed to at least 60°F. In warm winter areas, a second round of tomatoes can be started in mid-summer.

**Germination** Tomatoes will sprout in 1 to 2 weeks. Best germination occurs when soil temperature is between 60° and 85°F.

**Plant Spacing** Set tomato seedlings about 3 feet apart. Even determinate "bush" type tomatoes are sizeable by the end of the season.

**Garden Care** Plant seedlings deeply, burying stems up to the first set of true leaves; the buried stems will sprout roots, making your plants stronger. Provide steady moisture to tomatoes as they grow in order to prevent cracked fruits or brown spots on blossom ends, and conserve soil moisture by laying down a layer of mulch. It's best to set up supports—stakes, cages, or bamboo tepees—early on, while plants are still small. If possible, protect flowering plants when night temperatures dip below 55°F to help prevent blossom drop.

**Pests and Diseases** Most tomato diseases are caused by soil-borne fungi. Preventive measures include watering the soil (not the leaves) early in the day so plants remain dry, and changing the location of your tomato plants from year to year. Keep an eye out for large, hungry, green caterpillars (tomato hornworms), and remove them if you see them.

**Fertilize** Start each plant with a shovelful of compost, and fertilize with an all-purpose vegetable food at planting time. Side-dress with compost or slow-release fertilizer when the first fruits appear, and again 4-6 weeks later.

**Harvest** Harvest tomatoes when they are fully colored.




**Nutrition** Tomatoes are an excellent source of Vitamins A and C, and a rich source of lycopene, an antioxidant compound associated with heart health and lower risk of some types of cancer.

### Old Tomato, New Tomato

The staggering variety of tomatoes offered by seed retailers is, believe it or not, just a fraction of what exists in nature. The tomato family encompasses over 3000 species, with origins in the Americas as well as China and India. Breeders are turning to the tomato's wild relatives to provide genetic traits that will help them develop new versions of an old favorite. Some of today's tomatoes have increased lycopene content, multiple disease resistances, and even genetic resistance to the dreaded late blight. Rest assured, however, that tasty heirlooms will continue to be preserved alongside of disease-resistant hybrids.




# Tomato

*Solanum lycopersicum.*

	Ace 55	Beefsteak	Brandywine
	 <p>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</p>	 <p>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</p>	 <p>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</p>
<b>Description</b>	Determinate (4 ft.); open pollinated; mid-late.	Indeterminate Large vine; open pollinated; mid-late.	Indeterminate Large, potato-leaf vine; open-pollinated; mid-late.
<b>Fruit description</b>	Round, medium-sized (7-12 oz.) red tomatoes are low in acid.	Large, 5-inch, red ribbed tomatoes are juicy and sweet.	Reddish-pink ribbed fruits average 12 oz. but can grow to 2 lb.
<b>Comments</b>	Tolerant to Verticillium and Fusarium wilt.	Classic heirloom beefsteak.	Vigorous growth. Favorite for taste.
<b>Transplant to harvest</b>	785 days	85 days	80-90 days




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	Oregon Spring	Roma	San Marzano
	 <p>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</p>	 <p>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</p>	 <p>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</p>
<b>Description</b>	Determinate (3-4 ft.); open-pollinated; extra early.	Determinate (4 ft.); open pollinated; mid-season.	Indeterminate (6 ft.); open pollinated; mid-season.
<b>Fruit description</b>	3- to 4-inch, 5-7 oz. red oval fruits have few seeds.	Large yield of small (2-3 oz.), oblong red fruit ripens all at once.	Large yield of 4 oz. meaty, oblong red fruit.
<b>Comments</b>	Sets fruit in cool weather; good short-season choice.	Standard plum tomato for sauces.	Considered by many the tastiest plum tomato.
<b>Transplant to harvest</b>	760-70 days	75 days	80 days

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	<p><b>Large Red Cherry</b></p>  <p><small>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</small></p>	<p><b>Yellow Pear</b></p>  <p><small>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</small></p>	<p><b>Heirloom Mix</b></p>  <p><small>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</small></p>
<b>Description</b>	Indeterminate Large vine; open pollinated; mid-season.	Indeterminate Large vine; open pollinated; mid-season.	Rainbow blend: Brandywine tomatoes—red, black, pink, yellow; Cherokee purple; Green Zebra; White Wonder; and an orange tomato.
<b>Fruit description</b>	Round red cherry tomatoes are larger than most, about 1 oz.	Large yield of yellow pear-shaped 1-2 inch tomatoes.	Large and small tomatoes in (almost) all colors of the rainbow.
<b>Comments</b>	Vigorous plants produce over a long season.	Heirloom variety from 1800s; Disease resistant.	Colorful sampler of indeterminate type heirloom tomatoes.
<b>Transplant to harvest</b>	75 days	75 days	80-100 days