

# Growing Tomatoes



# Determine your growing space

- In ground
- Raised beds
- Pots or containers
- Hanging baskets

Tomatoes require:

- 6 or more hours of sunlight (8 is better!)
- Good drainage
- Vining tomatoes need support (tomato cages, fence, cattle/hog panels, etc.)



# Types of Tomato for Your Use/Space

**Indeterminate** - vining type plants that require support and produce fruit throughout it's life. Salad tomatoes, slicers, cherries.

**Determinate** - grow to a determined height and then stop. Most are bush or dwarf type plants, tend to produce their fruit in one or two flushes. These types are great if you are planning on canning your harvest.

**Semi-determinate** -



# Soil

In our area, amending the soil is usually necessary, IF you are blessed with enough soil to grow in!

Tomatoes respond best to lots of organic matter – compost, well composted/aged manure, etc.

Composting takes time - don't rush it.

Grow a winter cover crop if you aren't using the area during the fall/winter to add nitrogen.(Oats, buckwheat, rye, peas)

Be prepared to fertilize your plants. I fertilize every other week for my plants in the raised beds, and weekly for the potted plants.



# Transplanting Your Tomatoes

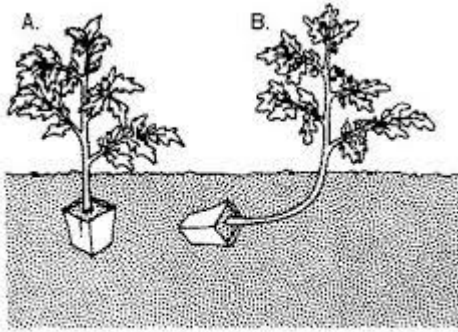


Fig. 2. Plant tomatoes slightly deeper than they were originally growing (A). If plants are leggy, set them as shown (B).

Dig a hole deep enough to bury your plant up to the first few set of leaves.

Throw your tomato fertilizer and fill the transplant hole with water and allow it to soak in.

If your transplant is too leggy, consider planting horizontally.

New roots will form all along the buried stem, making your plant stronger.

# My Tomato Food Mix

- 3 cups screened compost/mulch/dirt (I used bagged seed starter mix)
  - ½ cup Epson salt
  - 1 Tablespoon baking soda
  - ½ cup powdered milk
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1. Mix all ingredients together in a bucket.
  2. Place a handful of the mixture into the hole you have dug for your tomato plant. If you have already planted, sprinkle a handful around the stem of your plant and water in.
  3. Feed again once a month.

# Watering

- Water your plants slowly and deeply a few times a week
- Water from below, try not to sprinkle water on their leaves as it will encourage disease.
- Tomatoes prefer well drained soil.



# Staking Vining Tomatoes

Tomato cages

Cane or wooden poles

Florida weave

Pole teepees

Hog or Cattle panels (my favorite!)

(Dwarf, bush and micro tomatoes don't usually require staking)





# Pruning/Shaping and Maintenance



- Continue tying or clipping your plant to their support as they grow, tie loosely about every foot.
- Vining tomatoes should only be allowed up to two main branches in order to produce a good crop.
- Prune off suckers to keep this under control.
- Prune the bottom to about a foot off the ground for vining plants.
- **NEVER LET TOMATO LEAVES TOUCH THE GROUND!**
- Prune off dead and dying leaves and remove from the garden.

# Suckers

For your vining type tomatoes, each sucker will create another branch on your tomato plant, taking energy from the rest.

Pinch or cut these off and discard or put in water to start another plant!

Dwarf and bush plants usually do not need pruning, except to remove yellowing or dying/diseased leaves, or leaves that touch the ground.



# Insects on Tomatoes



Grow marigolds around your tomatoes to discourage insects.

**Hornworms** can be hand-picked, but if you must spray use BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) as an organic option.

**Spider mites and aphids** can be discouraged with insecticidal soap and a strong spray of water.

**Leaf Miners** - pick off severely affected leaves.

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# Diseases/Disorders of Tomatoes

**Blossom End Rot** - (BET) can be caused by inconsistent watering or a lack of calcium. Treat with garden lime (1 cup lime powder mixed in a gallon of water.) Pull affected fruit and discard.

**Cracking and cat-facing** - usually caused by inconsistent watering.

**Leaf curl** - several causes, but most common are herbicide drift, or the use of too fresh manure that was not composted long enough.



On Instagram:

**@hillcountrygardener**

Facebook Group I recommend:

**The Great Seed Swap and Friends**

**The Serious Seed Trader**