



Garden Center and Nursery

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# Tomato Tips

1. On determinate plants, let suckers grow. On indeterminate plants, decide how many “main” stems you want, and pinch off all suckers after you’ve got that number on each plant.
2. For larger (but fewer) fruit, limit the number of stems.
3. Prevent blossom end rot by keeping the soil evenly moist and by adding a tablespoon of Epsom salts to the hole at planting time. Calcium is also available as a foliar spray or soil drench to prevent this problem.
4. Plant tomatoes on their side (trench) or up to their first set of leaves in a deep hole. Roots will develop all along the underground stem giving the plant a bigger root system.
5. To reduce insect and disease problems, rotate tomato plants so they are grown only once in the same spot every three years.
6. If a heavy frost is expected, harvest all tomatoes, including green ones which will eventually ripen in storage.
7. As plants approach 3 feet tall, remove leaves from the bottom foot of the stem. These leaves receive little sunlight and are often the first to develop fungal problems.
8. A layer of organic mulch will help deter weeds and keep moisture levels consistent.
9. Weekly applications of compost tea may ward off many fungal diseases.
10. Start seedlings indoors 6-7 weeks before you plant outside. Use a grow light to give seedlings 18 hours of sunlight every day.
11. Give them plenty of room – at least 1½ feet between plants to allow for air circulation and ward of disease problems.
12. Keep plants well watered. When the soil around tomato plants dries out, a serious problem results. Calcium, one of the minerals necessary, is absorbed by the roots with water. If water is limited, so is calcium. The result is blossom-end rot, a brown, leathery spot found on the bottom of fruit.
13. Don’t put tomatoes in the refrigerator. Temperatures below 55 degrees Fahrenheit will destroy the fragile balance of sugars, acids and other flavor compounds. Store at room temperature, away from direct sunlight.