



GROWING TOMATOES IN CONTAINERS

PLANTING AND SPACING

Always give your container tomatoes plenty of room to grow (one plant per pot) and good drainage. You can grow any variety of tomato in a container as long as they have enough space. Most slicing tomatoes (e.g. Beefsteak) and cherry tomatoes (e.g. Supersweet 100) need at least a 5-gallon pot, they will also require staking or caging for support. More compact and bush varieties (e.g. Window Box Roma, Patio and Tiny Tim) will perform well in a 10" Patio Pot. There are also varieties that will grow well in hanging baskets (e.g. Tumbler Tom Red, Tiny Tim).

Plant your tomatoes relatively deep in the soil. Leave only the top two or three sets of leaves above the soil line. The part of the stem that is buried will sprout roots that help support and strengthen the plant.

TEMPERATURE

Tomatoes require Full Sun (at least six to eight hours), so choose a spot for your containers with the most exposure. Tomatoes can be planted when the night time air temperature is around 50°F. They will generally blossom from 55°F-95°F. Several days above 95°F and most varieties will drop their blossoms until temperatures cool back down.

SOIL

It is important to use good soil; specific container mixes are available at your local Garden Center. In pots as in the ground, tomatoes need well-drained soil with lots of organic matter. You can also add a little bit of lime to provide extra calcium (which helps prevent blossom end rot). Put a couple inches of gravel or even a few bricks in the bottom to stabilize the pot, because when the fruit sets the plant will become top-heavy.

NUTRITION

Fertilize properly. Choose a fertilizer that is not heavy on nitrogen (which fosters leaves at the expense of flowers and fruit). Phosphorus and potassium also are more important for fruit set. Whether the fertilizer is organic or not, the guaranteed analysis of major elements on the label should be even, such as 3-3-3, or higher on the last two numbers, such as 4-6-5.

WATER

Water regularly. Tomatoes need consistent moisture; swinging between extremes of wet and dry can damage your fruit. Be prepared to water daily. Water-holding gels (sold in crystal form and mixed in the soil) are especially good for container tomatoes.