

What can a garden grow?



tomatoes

The tomato is the edible, often red, fruit/berry of the plant *Solanum lycopersicum*, commonly known as a tomato plant. The plant belongs to the nightshade family. The species originated in western South America. The Nahuatl (Aztec language) word *tomatl* gave rise to the Spanish word “tomate”, from which the English word tomato derived. Its use as a cultivated food may have originated with the indigenous peoples of México. The Spanish discovered the tomato from their contact with the Aztec peoples during the Spanish colonization of the Americas, and then brought it to Europe, and, from there, to other parts of the European colonized world during the 16th century.

Numerous varieties of tomato are widely grown in temperate climates across the world, with greenhouses allowing its production throughout the year. The plants typically grow to 3-10 ft in height and have a weak stem that sprawls. It is a perennial in its native habitat, and cultivated as an annual. Fruit size varies according to cultivar, with a width range of 0.5-4 inches. For more info: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomato>.

How to grow Tomatoes?

Tomatoes are a summer staple in the garden for use in dishes like soups and sandwiches. Slicing tomatoes like Better Boy, Celebrity and Early Girl are old-time favorites and excellent producers. When selecting varieties, consider disease-resistance. When growing tomatoes outdoors, stick to a plan and makes sure each plant is given the right amount of nutrients, water and sunlight. Tomatoes require full sun so ensure the site receives at least six hours of direct sunlight per day.

Purchase plants from a local nursery or greenhouse. Look for dark green, stocky stems that are 8 to 10 inches tall and have a healthy root system. Select a well-drained area to prevent poor soil aeration that can lead to root and blossom rot. Plant the tomato away from trees and outdoor buildings to ensure a healthy plant and adequate sun. Space the tomato plants with 24 to 36 inches between each plant to ensure proper air circulation and prevent spreading disease. Grow the plants in neutral soil with a pH level reading of 6.5 to 7.0. If lime is needed to tweak pH, add it in late fall or early spring.

Remove the tomato from the container and shake excess mulch or soil off of the plant. Tomatoes in peat pots can remain within the pot. With a garden spade, dig a deep hole into the soil so that the lower leaves of the plant will be near the ground. Place the plant into the ground. Cover the plant with the remaining soil and press firmly down to ensure the plant is properly buried.

Water the tomato plants immediately. Make sure they receive at least 1 to 2 inches of water per week. Soak the soil when watering the tomatoes. Mulch around the base of the tomato plants, leaving a 2- to 3-inch-wide ring around each plant. Use straw, compost, hay or paper to prevent water evaporation.

Stake the tomatoes with a 6-foot-long piece of wood or plastic. Place the stake into the soil, 4 inches from the base of the tomato plant. Use a strip of nylon stocking or heavy string to tie the tomato plant to the stake. Allow at least 1/2 inch of slack for growth. For more info: <https://www.gardenguides.com/125348-grow-tomatoes-outdoors.html>.

How to cook Tomatoes?

Tomato is consumed in diverse ways, including raw, as an ingredient in many dishes, sauces, salads, and drinks. While tomatoes are botanically berry-type fruits, they are considered culinary vegetables as an ingredient or side dish for savory meals.

For more info:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipes/1095/fruits-and-vegetables/vegetables/tomatoes/hub&linkName=hub%20nav%20daughter&clickid=hub%20nav%202>.

