

## COMMON PESTS

Check daily for any signs of unwanted insects. Make sure to look at the soil, fruit and under the leaves. Following are some of the most common insects to watch out for.

**Aphids** – Small, flat, slightly ovate and green, white or black. They suck the sap from leaves causing distortion and leaf curl. Often, they will not kill the plant, but a severe infestation can cause stunted growth. Spray aphids away with the garden hose or insecticidal soap.

**Tomato Horn Worm** – A large, green caterpillar with a horn-like tail. It will begin feeding on the upper leaves and if left unchecked can completely defoliate a plant. They will leave dark green or black droppings. To get rid of them, hand pick them off plants with gloves and drop them into soapy water.

**Spider Mites** – Hard to see with the naked eye, spider mites suck the sap from the underside of leaves causing pale yellow marks on the top of the tomato leaf. Leaves eventually turn brown and fall off. Severe infestations can lead to extensive webbing over the plant. They can spread to other plants easily so monitor your other plants. Use insecticidal soap, horticultural oil or neem oil. At the end of the season destroy any infested plants.

**Potato Flea Beetle** – A bronze colored insect that flies and jumps. It deposits eggs in soil at the base of the plant. The larvae feed on the roots and as they mature, they come up and feed on foliage, stems and flowers. Dust leaves with talcum powder or use sticky traps. You can delay transplanting so the emerging adults will have nothing to feed on.

## DISEASES

Prevention is the most important way to deal with disease. Rotate crops every 3 years and avoid planting potatoes, peppers and eggplant where tomatoes were planted the prior year. Good ventilation and consistent watering are important. Destroy any infected plants.

**Early Blight** - A fungal disease that causes leaf drop. Look for dark brown/black spots on lower leaves and stems. Catch early and destroy diseased leaves. Use a copper-based fungicide to control. If blight takes hold, remove and destroy the plant.

**Late Blight** - Fungus causing gray moldy spots on leaves and fruits which later turn brown. Damp conditions encourage blight. Once it takes hold, remove and destroy the plant. Use a copper-based fungicide to control.

**Mosaic Virus** - Distorts and twists young leaves, mottle with yellow. Destroy plant.

**Powdery Mildew** – A powdery, white fungus covering the leaves. Leaves can eventually turn yellow and fall off. Easy to manage without needing to destroy the plant. Spray plants with neem oil or water. While powdery mildew loves humidity, it dislikes rain and water.

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## TOMATOES



## Growing Tips, Disease & Pest Prevention



## DETERMINATE VS. INDETERMINATE

**Determinate** tomatoes include bush and patio varieties. These plants grow to a specific height and their tomatoes usually ripen within a short time making them useful for canning and sauces. Small tomato cages are required for support.

**Indeterminate** tomatoes are vining plants that grow until the first frost. Tomatoes are produced along the stems until the plant is done. They need a large, sturdy support of at least 4 to 5 feet.

## PLANTING

**Prepare the Site:** Choose a spot with at least 6 hours of sun per day. Two to four months before planting, apply **Hi-Yield Hydrated Lime** for general plant health and blossom end rot prevention. At planting time, amend the soil with plenty of nutrient-rich, organic material such as manure or **EB Stone Soil Booster**.

**Plant:** Space plants 2 – 3 feet apart (depending on the variety) in rows 4 – 5 feet apart. To encourage a sturdy support, plant up to the first set of true leaves. Leggy plants can be laid on their side in a 3"-4" deep trench. Fill with soil up to the first true set of leaves. Roots will grow along the stems underground. Place tomato cages in the soil at planting. **\*Grafted tomatoes should be planted at the same level as in their pot.**

**Water:** Tomatoes need consistent water. Inconsistent watering can cause leaf curl or blossom end rot. Water when the top 1 or 2 inches of soil is dry.

**Fertilize:** Feed every 6-8 weeks with **E.B. Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food** to supply plants with needed nutrients and to stimulate fruit growth.

**Protect:** Until day and night temperatures are at least 55 degrees F, keep tomatoes in a greenhouse or gently cover with sheets, blankets, upside-down containers or an insulating product such as **Harvest Guard**.

**Harvest:** Ripe tomatoes should be firm, but yield to the touch. They should also break away from the plant easily. If you have to tug on them, they are not quite ready.

**Container Planting:** Plant determinate varieties in 5–10 gallon pots and indeterminate varieties in 10-15 gallon pots. Use a high-quality potting soil such as **Edna's Best Potting Soil** or **YnG Supreme Potting Mix**. Make sure the container has good drainage. Plant the tomato up to the first set of true leaves. Make sure watering stays consistent as containers dry out quickly in the heat of summer.

## COMPANION PLANTS

**Tomato Companions:** Asparagus, carrot, celery, cucumber, onion, parsley and peppers

**Tomato Allies:** **1.** Basil repels flies and mosquitoes; improves growth and flavor. **2.** Bee balm, chives and mint improve health and flavor. **3.** Borage deters tomato worms, improves growth and flavor. **4.** Dill, until mature, improves growth and health. Once mature, it stunts tomato growth. **5.** Marigold deters nematodes. **6.** Calendula deters tomato worm and general garden pests. **7.** Catnip, sage, mint, hyssop, nasturtium and basil repel potato flea beetle.

**Tomato Enemies:** **1.** Corn and tomatoes are attacked by the same worm. **2.** Mature dill slows tomato growth. **3.** Kohlrabi stunts tomato growth. **4.** Potatoes and tomatoes are attacked by the same blight.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

**No flowers on plant** - Too little sun or water

**Flowers but no fruit growing** – **1.** Too little sun or water; **2.** Temperatures too cold (lower than 55) or too hot (over 75 at night and over 90 at day); **3.** No pollinators or **4.** Low humidity, need 40-70% humidity for pollen to stick.

**Dropping flowers** – The weather is too hot and day temperatures are over 90 degrees F. Protect plants with shade cloth.

**Blossom End Rot** - A dark, sunken spot on the bottom of the tomato. Caused by **1.** Calcium imbalance; **2.** Inconsistent watering; **3.** Too much nitrogen, **4.** Incorrect soil pH; **5.** High salt levels or **6.** Root damage.

**Cracking** - Skin cracks when fruit growth is too rapid. This is usually caused by uneven watering and too much moisture from weather conditions.

**Yellowing Leaves** – Too much or too little water. Low nutrients in soil.