

Secrets to Successful Tomato Growing

1) *Plant Deep*: Tomato plants sprout additional roots along buried stems. Buy seedling with sturdy stems and bright green leaves. Dig a hole about 15 inches deep in an area that gets at least 6 to 8 hours full sun. Fill with amended soil. I add Azomite for calcium and more micronutrients to help prevent blossom end-rot. Snip off the seedling's lowest leaves, then set it in to the hole and fill, burying the leafless parts.

2) *Spacing*: Indeterminate and semi determinate tomatoes stake or trellis. If you do not have a lot of space plant 1.5 feet apart – more space plant 3 to 4 feet apart. Where space is very limited plant in a pulp pot at least 15 inches wide and deep. Plant 1 plant per pot.

3) *Mulch*: To retain moisture, cover soil around the plants with a layer of about two inches of seedless hay or straw, or add paper mulch, or plastic or a corn based mulch.

4) *Water, but not too much*. Irrigate deeply 3 to 4 days for the first few weeks. Once plant has started growing, water deeply, but less often. Over watering can cause cracking and less flavor. To prevent cracking, water after harvesting tomatoes.

5) *Don't Overfeed*: If plants over feed they produce lush leaves but produce few fruit. Apply balanced organic fertilizer at planting and again when flowers appear.

6) *Time your harvest*: Tomatoes taste better after they turn color, but just as they turn soft. Never refrigerate a tomato – it will lose flavors. Store on you counter top or a dry dark cool place.

