

GROWING TOMATOES



CHOOSING A TYPE

Tomatoes are either **indeterminate** or **determinate**. The former ripen throughout the season, while determinate can be harvested all at once for making sauces and the like.

PROPAGATION

Propagating tomatoes from seed is easy and inexpensive. The best soil temperature for seed germination is 60-70 degrees F. It will take 5-8 weeks to produce good plants from seed, depending on the temperature. Plant seeds in seed-starting potting mix, in a flat. Avoid putting more than 6-8 seeds per square inch. Cover with a plastic dome until plants are up. Transplant when the first true leaves appear. Water seedlings weekly with fertilizer. Plants are ready to go in the ground when the soil reaches 60 degrees F.

PLANTING IN THE GARDEN

Tomatoes should be hardened off before you plant them in the garden. This can be done gradually over a few days by increasing their exposure to the outdoors each day. Plant as soon as the soil is in good, workable condition and danger from frost is past. This will be May 1-10 in most western Oregon areas. Pick a spot that gets a good six hours of sun, in well drained soil with compost. Set the plants to the depth of the first leaves. Plant leggy tomato seedlings at about a 30-degree angle in a furrow long enough to leave the top 5-6 inches of the plant exposed.

STAKING AND PRUNING

Use a strong tomato cage or trellis for support. Prune leaves close to the ground to help prevent soil-borne diseases. On side stems with no blossoms, pinch off at the V where they meet at a main stem.

FERTILIZING AND WATERING

Start fertilizing about two weeks after planting with a 5-10-10 or a 5-10-5 mixture. Feed according to package directions about every three weeks until fruit ripens. Don't wait for soil to dry out between waterings. Irrigate deeply every two to three days, more often on hot days.

HARVEST AND STORAGE

Tomatoes can be harvested at the mature-green stage, semi-ripe, or fully ripe. It is best to keep tomatoes out of refrigerators. A storage temperature of 50-55 degrees F is recommended for semi-ripe to fully ripe tomatoes. If you are picking mature-green tomatoes, the best temperatures for ripening range from 65-70 degrees F.

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:

[HTTPS://EXTENSION.OREGONSTATE.EDU/NEW S/TIPS-GROWING-BIG-BEAUTIFUL-TOMATOES](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/new_s/tips-growing-big-beautiful-tomatoes)

[HTTPS://EXTENSION.OREGONSTATE.EDU/CATA LOG/PUB/EC1333](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/ec1333)

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