

# Tomatoes



**Sun:** Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 24 inches apart within rows or 1 plant per 5- to 7-gallon container. Plant April through July after all danger of frost has passed.

**Soil:** Amend with organic matter to create well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If a soil test shows that the pH level is below 6.2, apply lime in early spring and as recommended. If the pH level is above 6.2, apply a pH-neutral calcium supplement, such as gypsum. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup gypsum per plant to prevent blossom-end rot.

If growing in a container garden, amend each pot with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup gypsum. For proper drainage, use potting mix and ensure that containers have drainage holes. You could also use self-watering containers.

**Water:** Keep soil consistently moist, but not saturated. Apply roughly 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Avoid wetting plant leaves to prevent fungal disease. Mulching helps retain moisture.

**Plant:** Start seedlings 6 to 8 weeks before planting time, and slowly harden off 1 week before moving to the garden. If buying transplants, choose those with healthy color and stocky appearance. Avoid plants with flowers or fruit. Dig the planting hole as deep as the root ball or slightly deeper. Firmly pat down soil and water deeply.

**Fertilize:** In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting and according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches away from the stem (side-dress) at 3 to 4 weeks after planting.

**Insects/Diseases/Weeds:** Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, also known as “worms”). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

**Harvest:** Harvest at 70 to 90 days. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

**Other:** Tomatoes are heavy and plants need support. Plant near a trellis, inside a cage, or stake them.

Visit [www.aces.edu/go/growmore](http://www.aces.edu/go/growmore) for more information.

**GROW  
MORE  
GIVE MORE**

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs.

© 2022 by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. All rights reserved. [www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu) ANR-2876-E

[www.aces.edu/go/growmore](http://www.aces.edu/go/growmore)

**extension**  
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

SCAN HERE

