

2015 Tomato Planting Guide



The tomatoes Yamagami's offers have been chosen to both do well in our area, and because they taste good! Their names may not be familiar, but you'll recognize their true tomato tang. Ask one of Yamagami's Nursery Pros to help you choose tomatoes for your garden. We offer the best hybrids for our area as well as the tastiest heirloom varieties.

Location:

Tomato plants prefer at least 6 hours of sun. Tomatoes will grow in less sunlight but will set fewer fruit and take longer to mature. If your yard is shady, try cherry types and put in an extra plant or two to compensate for the lower yields.

Preparing your soil:

Tomatoes are heavy feeders, depleting the soil of minerals and nutrients. Spread *Gardner & Bloome Harvest Supreme* evenly over your plot (1 bag covers 25 sq. ft.) and dig it in to a depth of one foot, turning the soil several times to mix well. Next, blend *G & B Tomato, Vegetable & Herb Fertilizer* and *Agrowinn Minerals* (as per directions) into the top 4" of the soil. Add *G & B Worm Gro* to your soil to increase fruit production.



Transplanting:

Plant tomatoes deeply so that only two sets of leaves are above ground. Place a couple of aspirin under each plant to aid in disease prevention. Using an *Automator* will speed up the fruiting. Carefully place an *Automator* around the plant. Push the *Automator* firmly into the ground making sure that the 4 spikes penetrate the ground fully and the outer flange is flush with the ground. Cover all flanges with 1" of soil to anchor the *Automator* securely. Fill pan with 1/2 gal. of water and also water through center hole around the plant. If not using an *Automator*, top dress with *BioSol* after planting, especially if you have had disease problems in that soil before.



Support:

Tests have shown that caged tomatoes bear more heavily than staked ones. A healthy indeterminate (vine type) can easily get to 7 feet tall. Place the cage around plant while they are still small. Determinate (bush) varieties can use a small cage.

Watering:

Tomatoes need deep, infrequent, but regular watering. Erratic or over-watering will cause problems such as blossom end rot and worse, the fruit doesn't have much flavor or an appealing texture. In heavy clay soils, we recommend a thorough soaking every 7-10 days. In containers, tomatoes will need more frequent watering depending on size of the pot. Wait until the soil is dry on top and just barely moist 2" down, then water heavily.

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Fertilizer:

If using an *Automator*, fill the four spikes with *G & B Tomato, Vegetable & Herb Fertilizer*. Now when you water the plant, you'll also fertilize it. In two months, top dress with *Gardner & Bloome Tomato, Vegetable & Herb Fertilizer* as per package directions. For early plantings, *John and Bob's Soil Optimizer* increases cold-hardiness.

Potential Problems:

Pest Control: Tomatoes may be attacked by several pests. Most sucking insects can be controlled with *Dr. Earth Flower and Garden Insect Spray*. Hang a *Safer Sticky White Fly Trap* from your tomato cage for further protection against whiteflies. You can also use a *Bug Blaster* to remove insects from plants using only the water from your hose. *Safer Caterpillar Killer* (Bt) is effective against the voracious tomato hornworm and other fruit or leaf eating worms.

Abiotic Disorders resemble diseases but are actually signs of environmental problems.

- **Blossom End Rot** (Dark blossom end of fruit) is the result of the roots not being able to process Calcium. Most often, it is because the roots have been damaged from over-watering and cannot process the calcium that is present. To supply additional calcium, apply *FOLI-CAL* to new growth. It also helps to encourage flowering.

- **Leaf Curl or Leaf Roll** (Leaves roll upwards.) Caused by over-watering. Let the plant dry between watering and leaves will uncurl.

Mid-Day Wilt is likely to occur on hot days especially if the plant has no mulch or has not been planted deeply. If it perks up as the day cools off, add 2 or 3 inches of mulch to help. Do not compound the problem by adding more water.



Blossom End Rot

Disease Control: Bring samples of problems to the Info Center for diagnostic help.

Reduce the incidence of disease with these simple precautions:

- 1) Plant disease resistant varieties as labeled (EX: VFN).
- 2) Rotate the area used for planting tomatoes, eggplants and peppers and use *Biosol* fertilizer.
- 3) Avoid handling plants and never handle after smoking.
- 4) Irrigation for plants in the ground should be 7-10 days apart. For container plants, check soil moisture 2" down, every few days. Water when, at that depth, soil is barely damp.
- 5) Remove seriously diseased plants from your garden.

Pollination:

Tomatoes are self-pollinating (with the help of bees). To encourage bees, plant flowers they like such as Alyssum, Cosmos, Rosemary, Lantana and African Blue Basil around your tomatoes. If no bees are around, gently shake blossoms or brush them gently with a soft paintbrush to increase fruiting. Temperatures below 50°F can cause blossoms to drop. Other causes of blossom drop include too much heat, water, shade and/or fertilizer.

