

Tomatoes

Open position with 6 hours sun per day.

Soils...Clay soils might indicate that you need to add calcium before planting. A good option is **gypsum**, because **it boosts calcium** while loosening those sticky, red particles. If there is a calcium deficiency you could end up with **blossom end rot**.

Do not plant in same bed as previous year as this could weaken plant and encourage fungal diseases. In fact tomatoes should not return to the same bed for 3 years.

Seeds can stay viable for 4 – 6 years if stored correctly. Each seed has a **gelatinous sac** which contains chemicals that **inhibit germination** until seeds have a chance to glue themselves into soil crevices. This amazing plan works well in nature but when storing seeds, this sac if left can provide a haven for air-born diseases. Dry seeds out on kitchen paper.

Plant seedlings about 70cm apart and stake at same time as planting. Mulch should be about 5cm thick but keep away from stem of plant to avoid **collar rot**. Try saving **eggshelves**, drying them, crushing them to a powder, and adding this to the planting hole.

As your tomato plant grows, choose 2 main stems to train up stake. Keep plant tidy by trimming laterals and pinch out little stems that form between main stem and laterals.

Feeding...use the same fertilizer that you used before planting to top up once a month. If your plant seems to be producing over-sized leaves instead of fruit, then give a feed of potash to encourage flowers and fruit.

Watering... Tomatoes need a lot of water. Regularly to prevent drying out. Water weekly until fruit develops then once a day around soil. Try not to water leaf as this can encourage leaf blight and fungal diseases.

Pest Control...

Caterpillars.... Dipel... **Fruit Fly**... Eco Naturalure or hang fruit fly traps

near plants... Aphids...Pyrethrum... Early blight... Yellowing of lower leaves and spots on fruit... Copper fungicide... Companion Planting... Basil and Marigolds.

Harvest... Pick when red-ripe. Leave on vine too long and fruit will lose its sweetness and become floury.

Varieties... Apollo...Round red fruit EARLY in season...

Grosse Lisse... Medium to large red fruit MID TO LATE season.

Roma... Medium red egg shape... MID TO LATE season

Tiny Tim... Great for pots.

Tommy-Toe... Super sweet, produces hundreds of 50 cent sized tomatoes.