

GrowIn' Tomato

Potato family (Solanaceae)

Vegetables that belong to this family are tomato, aubergine, peppers and potato. Tomato is a very rich source of vitamins and a great ingredient for many delicious dishes, sauces and soups. Green tomatoes can be pickled.

Soil, sowing and planting

Tomatoes prefer a neutral soil (pH 6.5). If the tomatoes are grown outside you need about four months of warm weather with lots of sunshine. Tomatoes need a lot of good compost mixed into the soil. Worm compost would help. Tomatoes are best sown into modules of at least 5x5x8 cm first. After this they can be planted into pots of

15x15 cm. Before the tomatoes become pot bound they should be placed into their permanent bed or container. If they stay outside, don't forget to harden them off first and never do this before the last frost. If the tomato plants are planted into beds, there should be about 40 cm space in between each plant. Alternatively, the tomato plant could be grown into a big pot of at least 40x40 cm. Once the plants are higher than 50 cm it's very important to support them by tying them to a stake or a string. Keep the plants as tidy and neat as you can, by taking out little side shoots at the stem. An untidy tomato plant won't bear many fruits. Make sure you

don't take out the fruit producing stems, though. You will recognize these by their flowers. Tomatoes can be sown as early as January until May, when grown indoors. In hotter climates you could try sowing them outside after the last frost.

Harvest

You can harvest tomatoes from July until October. The tomatoes are ready when they are red in color.

Pests and diseases

As with potatoes the most serious disease for the tomato plant is blight. Tomato blight has to be prevented, since there is no cure for it. To prevent the blight, spray in warm humid weather with a natural antifungal, like Horsetail, copper sulfate or Thyme.

