

## Planning Your Summer Tomato Garden

Preparation for a bountiful harvest of tomatoes begins while snow still covers the ground. Before you can plant a beautiful row of seedlings, you must take several planning steps. Consulting a comprehensive cultivation guide on growing tomatoes will aid your planning process and help ensure you end up with a bountiful disease free crop.

### Choose Your Tomato Varieties

Hundreds of choice tomato varieties abound - enough to confuse gardeners. Tomatoes come in every shape, size and color. Huge tomatoes that take two hands to carry are related to tiny grape tomatoes no larger than the top of a thumb. Purple, yellow, orange and red tomatoes all spring from the same gene pool. Perfect round tomatoes, oblong tomatoes, little marble-sized tomatoes, and huge scrunchy looking tomatoes grow around the world. Tomatoes that grow as a never-ending vine share space with tomato plants that grow in a compact, shrub form. For your summer tomato garden, choose several tomato varieties, as each variety is best suited for its own culinary responsibility, and each takes specific care and tending.

For summer-long harvesting, choose tomato plants that are "indeterminate," or keep growing and growing and growing. These tomatoes will continue to set new fruit throughout the entire summer. These varieties are best for small cherry or grape sized tomatoes, as getting large fruit from these types of plants requires more work.

For shorter harvesting periods and larger tomatoes, choose "determinate" varieties, which grow to a certain size and stop. These plants put more energy into producing each fruit, resulting in larger, juicier fruit.

### Pre-Order Seedlings or Sow Seeds

Tomatoes are fragile in the beginning. Growing a tomato from a seed and harvesting fruit in the same growing season takes advance preparation. If you prefer not to gamble with starting your own seeds, many companies offer mail-order seedlings of endless varieties. Plan for your seedlings to arrive for planting once the danger of frost is completely past. Tomato plants are tropical in origin and have little tolerance for cold.

For adventurous gardeners, harvesting a tomato grown from seed to fruit is a rewarding experience. Start seeds at least eight weeks before you wish to plant. Sow seeds thinly on a bed of light potting mix inside. Keep the seeds moist, but not overly wet. Misting daily does the trick. Once the seedlings have their second set of leaves, "prick out" the seedlings (gently remove seedlings one at a time, while holding the leaves) and plant into small pots of their own. Once frost danger has passed, "harden off" your plants by putting them outside during the day, and bringing them in at night. After a week or two of "hardening off," you may plant outside.

### Prepare the Garden Soil

While your tomato seeds are germinating on their warm and comfy windowsill, use the time to prep the garden soil. Tomatoes need an organically rich, yet well-draining soil. If you have extremely wet and heavy soil, avoid walking on it during the winter, as excessive walking will compact the soil. Add organic matter on top of the soil to help prevent winter erosion. Once the soil warms enough to be workable, double-dig the soil (Dig all of the soil out, mix in some organic matter, and put soil back in) to break up hardened areas and allow for good root penetration.

### Plant the Garden

Once the soil is prepared, seedlings are hardened-off, and temperatures are warm (or warming), plant your tomato garden, and prepare for a summer of delicious harvests.

If you want more detailed tomato garden advice and tips from a world horticultural expert, visit [www.bestjuicytomatoes.com](http://www.bestjuicytomatoes.com)

### About the Author

I have two passions - growing tasty tomatoes and stamping out rude behaviour, bad clothing and fear in all women. Big call I know! My first website [How to Grow Juicy Tasty Tomatoes!](#) will help tomato growers to grow healthy tomato crops. My second website [How to Look, Act and Feel Stylish](#) is for women who want to make the most of themselves and achieve their dreams.

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