



Tomato Growing Checklist

- **Site & Variety Selection**
 - Choose a location with 6–8+ hours of direct sun
 - Ensure well-drained soil (use raised beds if needed)
 - Avoid planting where nightshades (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, potatoes) grew in past 2 years
 - Select disease-resistant varieties (look for VFN on tags)
- **Starting Tomatoes**
 - Start seeds indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost OR
 - Buy disease-free transplants, 4–6 inches tall
 - Transplant after last frost
 - Plant deep: bury stems so bottom leaves are just above soil
 - Space plants 2–4 feet apart, rows 4–5 feet apart
- **Soil & Fertilizing**
 - Mix balanced fertilizer into soil before planting
 - Side-dress each plant with 1–2 tablespoons tomato fertilizer every 2–3 weeks from fruit set
- **Watering & Mulching**
 - Water deeply and consistently (1 inch/week, 2x in hot climates)
 - Use drip or soaker hoses, avoid wetting foliage
 - Water early morning
 - Mulch with 2–3 inches (straw, wood chips)
- **Supporting Plants**
 - Stake or cage all tomatoes, especially indeterminate plants
- **Pest & Disease Prevention**
 - Rotate crops annually
 - Mulch to prevent disease splash

- Remove affected or wilted plants/leaves promptly
- Destroy garden debris each winter
- Use only approved fungicides/insecticides, follow labels
- Handpick hornworms, use traps for stink bugs, and spray aphids with water/insecticidal soap
- **Troubleshooting**
 - Watch for blossom-end rot (keep moisture even, test for calcium)
 - Watch for leaf spots/blights (remove leaves, fungicide, rotate crops)
 - Manage wilts (remove and destroy, plant V/FN resistant types)
 - Control TSWV by removing plants, controlling weeds, using reflective mulch
- **Harvesting & Storage**
 - Pick tomatoes when fully colored
 - Ripen nearly-ripe fruit indoors if needed
 - Store at room temp (refrigerate only cut tomatoes)
 - Use or process overripe fruit quickly
- **End of Season**
 - Save seeds from healthy, heirloom plants only

Bonus

- Remove “suckers” below first flower cluster on indeterminate types.
- If you have gardening questions, book a call or email me at stephanie@allaboutgardeningguides. I charge \$25 for up to 15 minutes.