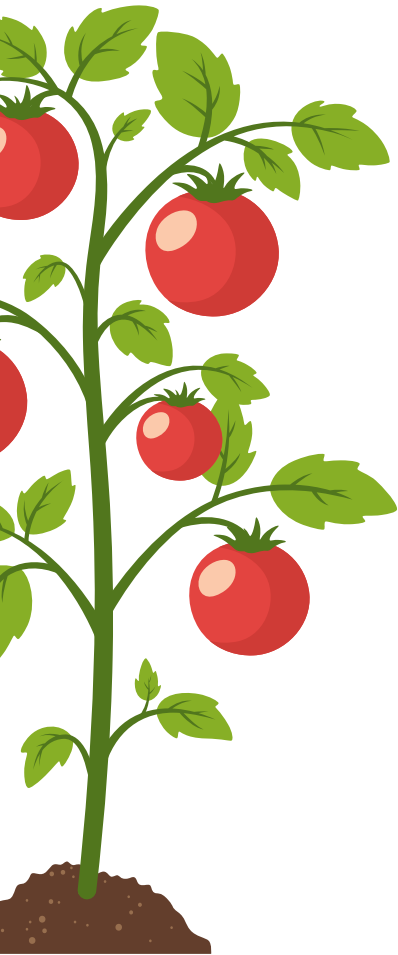


TOMATOES

101



Planting Your Tomato Baby

Dig deep!

- Bury the stem deeper than you think — right up to the first real set of leaves. Tomatoes sprout roots all along their stems, so deeper planting = stronger plants!

Spacing:

- Give them room to shine — plant 18-24 inches apart for airflow and happy vibes. If you're tight on space, you can plant in as little as 1 square foot but make sure to prune and allow for good airflow to prevent disease.

Bonus Move:

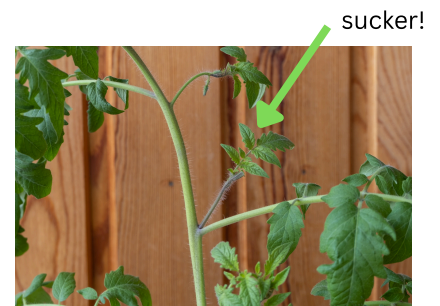
- Sprinkle a spoonful of organic fertilizer in the hole and top dress or mix some fresh compost into your soil for a head start on nutrients and calcium!

Support Your Superstar

- **Trellis, cage, or stake** — whatever you do, don't leave your tomato flopping around like it's at a music festival.
- Set up support at planting time to avoid root damage later.

Tame Those Suckers

- **Suckers** are the tiny shoots that pop up between the main stem and a branch.
- **Pinch or snip** them off when small to focus the plant's energy on fruit production (not growing a jungle)



Common Tomato Drama

Blossom End Rot:

- Caused by calcium imbalance. Mulch, consistent watering, and nutrient rich soil help prevent it!

Cracking:

- Happens if tomatoes soak up water too fast after a dry spell. Mulch helps regulate moisture!

Hornworms:

- Big green freeloaders. Hand-pick them and show them the door - or they can decimate a plant in no time flat!

Final Tomato Wisdom

- **Water deeply** at the roots - but not too often (1-2" per week) — think spa day, not daily splash.
- **Mulch** around the base to keep roots cool and happy.

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