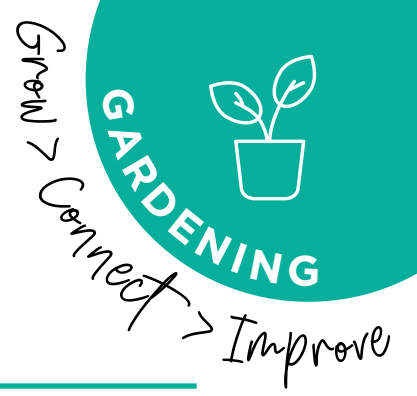




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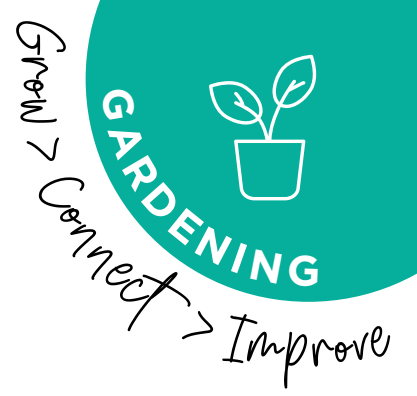
Growing Tomatoes



Everyone who has tasted a home-grown tomato has noticed the difference in the flavour and even the texture. Tomatoes are easy to grow at home - like most plants they require sunlight, water and patience. There are many varieties and these can suit any space.



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Tomatoes need:

- Full sun (6-8hrs per day)
- Regular watering
- Well drained soil

They are suitable to all climatic zones.

Protect the plants from strong winds.

Tall tomatoes will require stakes or a cage for support (it is best to put these in when planting the tomato).

Once the tomatoes are established and are taller than 40cm use old stockings to tie the tomatoes to the stake; don't tie them too tight. Continue to tie parts throughout the growing process.

I always plant tomatoes as seedlings and plant once frost is unlikely, as frost will damage the plant.

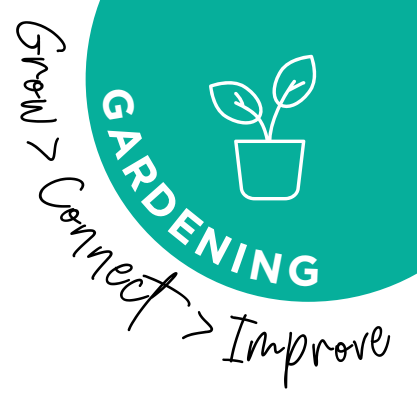
Tomatoes take about 10 -14 weeks to mature.

Caterpillars do like tomatoes; you will notice some holes in the leaves. Spray with a natural caterpillar





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killer insecticide. (You can make your own by mixing Warm water with Canola oil and a small amount of liquid soap; spray this onto the caterpillars.)

Growing in Pots

Choose smaller tomato varieties to plant in pots. Compact bush type varieties are the best for pots.

Choose a pot at least 400mm wide and deep, position the pot in full sun.

Use loose well-draining soil - I suggest a quality potting mix.

Potted plants will dry out quicker than in-ground plants so ensure you water regularly.

Tips

Mulch will help retain moisture in the soil. Don't put the mulch too close to the plants as it won't allow the soil to heat up.

Tomatoes like to grow in compost and do enjoy some animal manure. Just ensure the manure is mixed with soil and isn't too strong.

Don't let your tommies' soil dry out, but don't have wet boggy soil either.

Grey water is not recommended for watering tomatoes.

Water the soil, not directly on the plant.

If left alone, tomato plants will grow into a large messy vine with many branches. I like to pinch and remove the suckers that develop in the joint of two branches. They won't bear fruit and take energy away from the plant.

Also, to help with the large messy vines, as the the tomato plants are establishing (approx. 100cm high) remove the leaves from the bottom of the plant, with your scissors or cutters. By removing the lower leaves, they won't touch the ground, decreasing the chance of fungal disease. This also allows sun and airflow around the plant.

Tomatoes may need feeding; use a granule or liquid fertilizer - ask at your local garden supplier for their recommendation.

Most of all enjoy your own ripe, juicy tomatoes !!!

