



Tomato Seed Starting Tips



1. Seeds can be started indoors 6-8 weeks before the last anticipated frost in your growing area.
2. Obtain some seed starting mix at the local garden store. The mix should contain peat moss to help retain water during seed germination as the seeds should be kept moist for proper germination.
3. If you are starting many varieties of tomatoes or other seedlings, you should have a separate starting container for each variety. Be sure you mark your containers with seed type. We use white plastic plant tags that can be written on with either permanent marker, or pencil.
4. In a old bowl, bucket, or other container, place some of starting mix and add water while mixing to moisten the mix.
5. Fill the trays with 1-1 1/2" of the moistened seed starting mix and distribute seeds over surface. Cover seeds with 1/4" of starting mix and gently firm the surface.
6. Check seed trays every 2-3 days to make sure they stay moist. We cover ours with a loose fitting piece of plastic wrap to help retain water. Seeds will usually take 10-14 days to germinate (depending upon variety). Once the seeds have sprouted, they will need a light source. We start our seedlings in our basement and use fluorescent grow lights which works very well. If you start the seeds on a window sill make sure you turn the seeds daily to keep them from bending toward the light. If starting under a grow light, make sure the grow light is within 6" of the seedlings or they will become tall and leggy. Seedlings need 12-16 hours of light a day. An inexpensive timer works well to control grow light time. Seedlings should be kept within 6" of the grow lights. Seedlings must be kept moist in a well drained container. Too much water can lead to damping off of seedlings.
7. Once the seedlings are showing a second set of leaves, it is time to transplant them from the starting tray to individual pots. We have found that the best pots are plastic as they retain more water. The peat pots work well if you make sure to keep them moist...they work great for transplanting as you do not disturb the root structure of the seedlings. Gently loosen the soil in the starting tray and separate individual plants. Fill the transplant pot loosely with moistened starter mix and use a pencil to make a hole in the starting mix. Insert the seedling into the hole up to the second set of leaves...this may require the slight twisting or bunching up of the plant's root as they can get pretty long. Gently firm the soil around the seedling and moisten once you have finished transplanting.
8. If you start your seeds very early, you may need to transplant some of your biggest plants again as they will outgrow their pots. For our healthiest plants, we transplant them into 1/2 gallon milk containers that have been cut off about 6" from the bottom...these work Great!!!

Transplanting Outdoors

9. When it looks like it is time to plant your seedlings outside, you will need to harden off the plants. This is simply getting them adjusted to the changing conditions outdoors. When you begin this, make sure the plants are kept in the shade for the first few days of hardening so they don't get sun-burned. Plants should be returned inside at night...this seems like a lot of work but it will yield stronger, healthier plants. Hardening off usually takes 7-10 days.
10. When planting your seedlings in the garden, make a shallow trench and lay the seedling in on its side. Bury the entire plant up to the first set of leaves as the stem is capable of producing roots. This will greatly improve your plants ability to obtain water and nutrients resulting in greater yields!!

Plant Care in Your Garden

11. Once the tomato plants are in your garden they should be watered daily for the first week. They should be supported as they grow with wooden stakes or metal cages. We use old nylons cut into strips to tie plants to supports through the season as they do not bruise the stalks. Many commercial plant ties are also available.
12. Caution!!! Plants are very susceptible when young, to cutworms which will cut the plant off at the surface of the soil. To avoid these without chemicals, simply take a piece of aluminum (cut up a pie plate into 2' strips) and fashion a collar that slips around the plant and gently place in the soil around the stalk.
13. Tomato hornworms will more than likely be a problem when your plants start bearing fruit. They devour the foliage and in some cases even eat new green tomatoes. The easiest way we have found to get rid of these is to put a bounty out on them at ten cents a piece and have our kids pick them off. A natural bacteria is also available in plant stores that works.

GOOD LUCK....AND THANKS!!!

www.tomatobob.com

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For questions or comments please call us Mon.—Fri., 9-4

614.256.6298

100% Guarantee

Thank you for your seed order.

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Tomatobob guarantees that the seeds we sell conform to the label description, as required by State and Federal Seed Laws, within acceptable tolerances. We make no other guarantees, express or implied, of merchantability, fitness for purpose, or otherwise, other than minimum germination requirements.

Our liability for the breach of this guarantee, whether contractual, for negligence, or for any other reason, is limited to the refund of the purchase price of the seeds, which shall release us from any further liability.

In no way shall we be liable for any losses resulting from the use of purchased seeds including loss of profit from poor yields, seed borne diseases, or any other loss.

By placing an order, you are agreeing to this guarantee. If this guarantee is not acceptable, then the seeds must be returned within 30 days in the original packaging and a full refund will be issued.

Substitutions

Due to the nature of seed offerings, some varieties may run in short supply throughout the year. While we try and note seeds that are out of stock on our website, they will be in our printed catalog. If a shortage occurs, we will substitute with a similar variety and also include some extra seeds at no cost. If you would rather not have a substitution, kindly let us know and we will be happy to refund the balance.

As Always, Good luck with your Heirlooms!

Regards,

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