



SNAP-Ed

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# Growing in Washington Tomatoes



## Quick Garden Tips

- 1 Plant tomatoes outside as small plants (called “starts”) when the soil temperature is at least 55 degrees F and nighttime temperatures are above 45 degrees F.
- 2 For best results, choose sturdy tomato starts that are short and dark green. Avoid starts that are leggy (tall and floppy), yellow or have started flowering.
- 3 Plant the starts deeper than the pot they were grown in, with only a few sets of leaves showing above the soil.
- 4 Add an all-purpose fertilizer in the bottom of the planting hole at planting time and around the plant about every 3 weeks until tomatoes ripen. Follow directions on the fertilizer container.
- 5 Most tomatoes need extra support. Provide a sturdy tomato cage, stake or trellis at planting time.
- 6 Keep the soil evenly moist until tomatoes appear, then water deeply 1 or 2 times a week.



### Season and Location

☀ Tomatoes need at least 8 hours of direct sun each day.



### Growing Pattern

Often listed on the plant or seed label.

☀ **Determinant:** bushy plants need less support; tomatoes ripen at about the same time. Can be grown in containers or in the ground.

☀ **Indeterminant:** taller, wider plants must have support; tomatoes ripen over a longer season. Better for growing in the ground.

### Container Gardening

☀ Choose a determinate type with smaller sized tomatoes.

☀ Plant one tomato in at least a 5-gallon container. Larger containers allow for a bigger harvest.

☀ Requires frequent and even watering.

### Key Pests and Diseases

☀ **Tomato hornworm:** pick off worms

☀ **Aphids:** hose off with water

☀ **Blossom end rot:** mulch plants and keep soil moisture even. Some varieties, such as Roma, are more prone to this condition, so choose other varieties if it is a problem in your garden.

## Washington Gardening Calendar for Tomatoes

Seedling



Transplant



Harvest



Adapted from WSU Extension Publication EM0575E.

## Recommended Types to Grow

There are over 4,000 tomato types in many colors, shapes and sizes!

**Small fruited/cherry:** Chocolate Cherry, Juliet, Sungold, SunSugar, Sweet Million

**Slicer/Early:** Oregon Spring

**Slicer/Mid season:** Carmello, Celebrity, Fantastic

**Slicer/heirloom:** Black Krim, Brandywine, Cosmonaut Volkov, Green Zebra

**Paste:** San Marzano

**Container:** Early Girl, Patio, Gold Nugget, Red Robin, Little Napoli

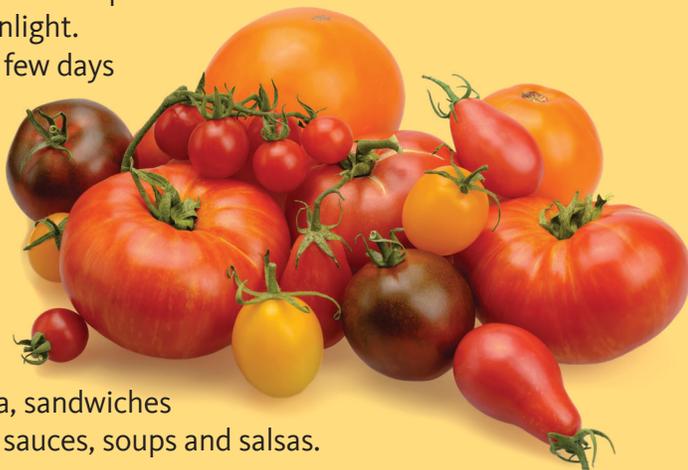


## When and How to Harvest

- ✿ Harvest tomatoes before they are completely ripe. Twist tomatoes off the vine or cut the stem with clippers or scissors to avoid hurting the plant.
- ✿ Unripe tomatoes that are starting to turn color can be taken indoors to ripen. Harvest these tomatoes when outdoor temperatures go below 50 degrees F.

## Storage and Cooking

- ✿ Store tomatoes at room temperature away from direct sunlight. Plan to use within a few days after they ripen.
- ✿ Refrigerating ripe tomatoes can help delay softening but may reduce flavor.
- ✿ Tomatoes are enjoyed raw and cooked. Add to pizza, sandwiches and salads or use in sauces, soups and salsas.



## Baked Tomatoes with Cheese

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 15 minutes

**Makes:** 3 cups

### Ingredients

2 large **tomatoes** cut into thick slices (about 1 inch)

½ cup shredded **cheese** (try parmesan, Swiss or cheddar)

1 teaspoon dried **oregano**

¼ teaspoon each **salt** and **pepper**

¼ teaspoon **garlic powder** (1 clove garlic, minced)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place tomato slices in a single layer in a shallow baking dish.
2. In a small bowl, combine cheese, oregano, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Sprinkle mixture over tomatoes.
3. Bake 5 to 10 minutes, or until cheese turns golden brown and starts to bubble. Serve warm.
4. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

