

TOMATO

Nothing beats a plump, juicy, homegrown tomato!



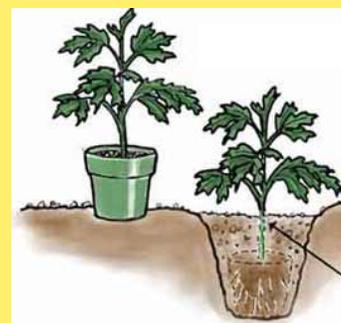
FUN FACTS!

Here are some fun facts about one of America's favorite fruit - yes, it is a fruit!

- The largest tomato on record was grown in the USA in 2020. It weighed a whopping 10 pounds and 12.7 ounces!
- The largest tomato plant was found on the Walt Disney World Resort in 2006. This single plant covered 610 square feet and produced 32,194 tomatoes!
- Arkansas has named the tomato both its State Fruit and its State Vegetable.
- Tomatoes are a member of the Nightshade family along with peppers, potatoes and eggplants.

PLANTING TIPS:

When you're planting tomato seedlings, choose a spot that gets at least 7 hours of sunlight. Also be sure to bury them nice and deep. Plant them deep enough so that the first leaf is close to the soil but not touching the ground.



TOMATO PRUNING

Removing bottom leaves: when the tomato plant reaches about 2 feet tall, remove the oldest leaves from the bottom of the stem. You can remove old leaves up to the first flowering branch. This improves air flow and reduces the chance of fungal diseases.



Removing suckers: many tomato growers will pinch off, or remove suckers off the plant. Suckers grow between the main stem and the branches. They are usually removed in order to help the tomato plant use its energy on fruit production. The picture on the left shows a sucker that will be removed.

TOMATO CHIPS

For a fun twist on fresh tomatoes, try these tomato 'chips'. They're light, crispy and packed full of summer flavor!



Recipe by Amanda George
Image credit: eatwell101.com

- 1. Preheat** the oven to 250 degrees F
- 2. Wash** a few large, ripe tomatoes to remove any dirt
- 3. Slice** the tomatoes into rounds about 1/16th of an inch thick
- 4. Spread** the slices in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet
- 5. Bake** the tomatoes for about 8 hours, flipping each slice at the halfway point
- 6. Remove** the 'chips' from the oven and allow to cool - they'll crisp up even more!
- 7. Enjoy** the tomato chips once cooled and store in an air-tight container

HAVE A SURPLUS?

A surplus of tomatoes in the garden doesn't have to mean spending hours in the kitchen chopping and canning. You can actually freeze tomatoes whole! Here's how:

1. Give them a good wash to remove all the dirt after harvesting.
2. Place the whole tomatoes in a large freezer-safe Zip-Lock bag and lay them in a single layer in the freezer to freeze solid.
3. When you're ready to use them, simply take the frozen tomatoes directly from the freezer and blanch them in boiling water. This will allow you to easily peel the skin off the tomatoes.

Once blanched and peeled, these tomatoes make a great base for soups, sauces or baked dishes that call for canned tomatoes!