

Choosing the right plants for your garden is a combination of researching various websites and just asking other gardeners what types they enjoy growing.

Where are you growing them? In pots? Open garden space? Raised beds?

Determinate tomato sometimes, called Patio Tomatoes, normally have a shorter time to mature than indeterminate tomatoes; 50 to 70 days. They usually only produce for about a 2 to 4 week period then die off. This is great for canning because they all mature around the same time. They also stay bushy, and need limited, if any support. so they are good in containers

Indeterminate tomato varieties, sometimes called vining tomatoes because they can easily grow 8 feet tall, continue to set and ripen fruit throughout the growing season until frost kills the plants. They will give you a slow and steady supply of tomatoes, rather than one large harvest. However, they tend to start ripening a little later in the season than determinate varieties do because they first spend a good amount of time growing tall. The majority of tomato varieties are indeterminate, including most heirlooms and cherry types.

Bigger is not always better when shopping for plants. A sturdy stem 8" to 12" plant is perfect for transplanting into your garden.

When to plant: Best advice is to look at the USDA website and know what growing zone you are in to determine when to start thinking about planting outside. In Northern Indiana that is usually around mid May, but you also want to watch the weather forecast for any chance of frost.

There is no good reason to rush planting. Tomatoes like soil temps above 50 degrees as well as overnight temps above 50 degrees.

Once it is time to plant, you will want plant deeper than the level of soil in the pot, with the exception of determinate types which can be planted at the same depth as in the pot they were grown in. Otherwise you want to trim the bottom branches off and plant 50% of the plant underground. This gives the plant the ability to grow a deep strong root system in order to feed those 8 foot tall plants.

In the bottom of the hole, put a handful of worm castings , and some crushed eggshells. The eggshells add calcium which tomatoes crave. There are commercially made products also that you can research and use also.

The supports for tomato plants should be put in early as to not damage the roots of the plant.

Mulch around your tomatoes. This helps prevent disease splashing onto bottom leaves, and keeps soil moist.

Pruning: Determinate tomatoes do not need pruning, except to get rid of dead leaves. Indeterminate tomatoes need pruning. Start when the plant is about 3' tall . 1st, trim off the bottom 12 inches of branches off. The bottom leaves normally do not produce fruit, and is where disease can splash onto, causing disease. Pruning side branches (sometimes called suckers) all season can help improve tomato production. The side branch is the part that is between the main stem and the thicker main branch coming out the sides. These can be removed all season long.