

This content of this article was prepared by [Wiki Farmer](#) and edited by Fresh Fruit Portal.

More and more people like to grow their own fruits and vegetables in their backyard, either because they enjoy this stress-relief process or because they want to control everything they consume. However, growing fruits and vegetables in the backyard have some secrets we will share below.

Hints on Growing Tomato in your backyard:

Tomatoes are warm-season plants. They need temperatures of 18 °C to 26 °C (64.4-78.8 °F) and plenty of sunlight (at least 6 hours a day) to thrive.

Tomato plants can tolerate temperatures near 1 °C (33.8 °F) without dying out, but only for very short periods. Of course, we will begin to notice problems in fruit setting when daily temperatures remain below 17 °C (63 °F) for several days.

If these temperatures occur during the ripening phase, the fruits will probably not be able to blush, because the production of substances responsible for the red color normally stops below 16 °C (60.8 °F).

Their growth stops completely at temperatures below 9 °C (48.2 °F). Soil temperatures below 14 °C (57.2 °F) will most probably cause root growth problems. Problems in fruit setting and ripening also occur at very high temperatures.

If you consider starting tomatoes from seed, be sure to buy certified seed from a legitimate seller. Otherwise, germination rates will be probably low, and you will lose your time.

Keep in mind that tomato seeds have a low tolerance to cold. Thus, you are advised to make a seedbed first, keeping the soil temperature at 23-26 °C (73.4-78.8 °F).

You can use turf as a substrate for optimal aeration. Temperatures below 10-12 °C (50-53.6 °F) can prevent germination. The seeds should remain in moist but not soggy soil until germination.

The best time to transplant the seedlings to their final positions is 4-7 weeks after sowing, when they will have developed 4-6 true leaves.

If you do not want to waste time starting from seeds, you can buy young plants from a nursery and transplant them directly to their final positions.

Keep in mind that transplanting tomato seedlings may not be successful at temperatures below 15 °C (59 °F).

Make sure that you do not plant your tomato seedlings in areas where you previously had planted other *Solanaceae* (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplants) in order to avoid some soil-borne diseases. In most cases, the right time for planting is during spring.

However, in some areas where temperatures are high enough, planting can certainly take place earlier. On the other hand, in the northern areas, producers usually plant tomatoes during early summer or later.

There are also late varieties planted very late and harvested during late fall - early winter (November - December).

One important step (especially in areas with low soil temperatures during the planting season) is the linear plastic coverage. Many producers cover the rows with black plastic film.

They use this technique in order to keep the root zone temperature at optimum levels (above 21 °C or 69.8 °F) as well as to prevent weeds from growing.

If you wish to have many tomato plants in a small yard, keep in mind that professional growers prefer planting in single rows with an average distance of 0.3 - 0.6 m (12-24 in) between plants in the row and 0.8 to 1.3 m (31.5-51.2 in) distance between rows.

However, overcrowding the plants is not a good idea. Less dense planting allows for better foliage's access to sunlight, better aeration and protection against certain diseases.

Thus, we can see most amateur growers who have no particular space problem to plant tomatoes 1 meter (40 inches.) apart inside the row and at a distance of 1,5 m (60 inches) between rows.

Amateur grower Charles Wilber from Alabama earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records, as the four tomato plants he grew finally produced 620 kg (1366 lbs.) of fruit.

When asked about his secret, he said he did not use an expensive hybrid, nor did he applied a specialized fertilizer. Very frequent pinching of suckers was vital to its production.

Pruning is very important in tomato cultivation, but not for all varieties. In short, indeterminate varieties need regular pruning, whereas determinate varieties can remain unpruned.

Indeterminate varieties are pruned to grow on a single, double or triple stem. Pruning facilitates proper aeration and thus protects the plant from various infections.

In addition, we have a better fruit to foliage ratio. When pruning, it is very important to use the proper pruning tools, to avoid harming the plant.

Indeterminate tomatoes need support through staking. The simplest technique is to place a stack near every tomato plant and tie gently the stem on the stack.

This technique helps the thin tomato tissue stay in a vertical position. At the same time, it prevents stem foliage and fruits from touching the ground and thus, protects the plant from soil pests and diseases.

Moreover, stacking makes it easier to harvest the fruits and improves the aeration and general health of the plant.

Tomato plants generally have middle to high tolerance to drought. On the other hand, they

do not like soggy soil. Thus, you may avoid excessive irrigation.

However, tomatoes require frequent watering and especially during fruit filling. Remember that 100 grams of tomato fruit contain more than 94 grams of water.

On average, tomato plant consumes 700 mm of total water per growing period for outdoor cultivation. Make sure you provide your plants with stable quantities of water to avoid possible stress on the plant.

Keep in mind that uneven watering during fruit set is likely to cause many problems.

When growing in your backyard, all you need for the average tomato plant that grows in the average soil is the addition of compost. Composting is an environmentally friendly process with excellent plant nutrition results at home, offering significant savings.

It is a process through which organic residues such as leaves, branches, peels and other food residues (e.g. eggshells) that may be present in our kitchen are transformed through various processes and with the help of soil microorganisms into a substance rich in nutrients, called compost.

Proper use of compost will prevent soil erosion. Also, soil pathogens are controlled. We need to be careful though, as not all home-grown food waste is suitable for composting.

The process is quite simple. You need a compost bin or silo, a shredder, soil and organic waste. The shredder is quite important, as to speed up the process, the materials intended for the composting bin must be small enough.

Most tomatoes mature and can be harvested seven to ten weeks from transplanting. If all things go well, you may be able to harvest tomatoes up to 2-3 times per week.

Once again, the pruning tools and gloves we need to use must be of high quality and must be accompanied by the necessary certificates.

Personal security is a very important factor for a backyard grower. It may be a seemingly harmless hobby, but it does carry risks that an amateur farmer may not have ever imagined.

It is important to get good quality boots. The garden often attracts unwanted visitors looking for food, such as snakes or mice, especially during the summer, when tomatoes mature and need to be checked daily for harvest.

A wrong step in the garden can turn harmful. It is therefore extremely important to protect your feet from dangers.