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Few things taste better than a fresh tomato straight out of your own garden. Tomatoes are fairly easy to grow and are rich in vitamins A, B and C. Michigan State University's [Michigan Fresh: Growing Tomatoes](#) fact sheet can help home gardeners grow a healthy crop. The fact sheet, written by [Michigan State University Extension](#) educator [Gretchen Voyle](#), covers the basic types of tomatoes, planting tips and growing best practices.

Tomatoes are a warm-season crop and develop best when temperatures are between 70 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit. In Michigan, many gardeners plant tomato transplants around Memorial Day at the end of May. If you like to start your tomatoes inside from seed, it is best to start six to eight weeks before moving them outside.

Ben Bylsma, owner of [Real Food Farm](#) in Caledonia, Michigan, has been growing tomatoes for many years. He has several tips for home gardeners. His first tip involves selecting [healthy transplants](#) from a reliable source.

He suggests selecting a plant as large as you can go without having flowers. A larger, more mature plant will get you fruit faster, more than making up for that extra dollar or two. Avoid plants with flowers since the plant will put energy into fruit production rather than establishing itself in your garden.

Bylsma also suggests burying the stem quite deep as tomato plants root along the stem. He says he buries 3-4 inches of stem when he transplants. You should remove any leaves that would be buried.

For disease control, fungus and similar microorganisms are a tomato plant's worst enemy. Growth can be prevented somewhat by keeping the foliage as dry as possible and trying not to get water on any leaves, only the roots. Bylsma suggests watering early in the morning, so the foliage has a chance to dry throughout the day. He also recommends keeping a constant soil moisture level as dry-wet cycles can cause splitting and blossom end rot.

MSU Extension's [Michigan Fresh](#) fact sheets will provide you with free information on how to grow, preserve and cook over eighty different foods including fruits, vegetables, meats, fish and specialty crops like Christmas Trees and hops.