

PLANT * GROW

- * Plant in full sun. Tomatoes need at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- * If you purchase tomato plants, look for sturdy, short, dark green plants.
- * It is estimated that there are 25,000-40,000 varieties of tomatoes worldwide.
- * Tomato plants are annuals (They need to be planted each year.)
- * Sow seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before transplanting outside. Seeds germinate best at 75-90°F.
- * Plant seedlings outside when nighttime temperatures are consistently above 45°F.
- * Seedlings grow best if planted deeper than they were planted in containers.
- * To reduce root disease risk, don't plant on soil that has recently grown tomatoes, potatoes, peppers or eggplant for at least two years.
- * Tomato plants need a consistent supply of moisture but do not tolerate waterlogged soils. Mulch around plants to help keep soil moist.
- * Stake and/or cage tall tomato varieties.
- * Eliminate weeds around plant area to improve air circulation.
- * Harvest tomatoes before frost. Frost will kill your tomatoes.
- * Harvest almost ripe green tomatoes before frost to ripen indoors.

Cornell University Home Garden Websites:

General gardening:

<http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/>

Tomato specific:

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/sceneea10.html>

PURCHASE

- * Select tomatoes with bright, shiny skins and firm flesh.
- * Buy firm, fragrant, local tomatoes-picked vine ripe if possible.
- * Tomatoes are available from July through September, or even earlier if produced in a greenhouse or with a plastic cover.



ENJOY YOUR TOMATOES

- * Tomatoes are low in fat; saturated fat free; have very low sodium; low calorie; high in Vitamin A and C, and are a good source of potassium and lycopene.
- * Yellow tomatoes are not really any lower in acid than red; they contain more sugar and, therefore, have a sweeter taste.
- * Tomatoes are not vegetables, but are fruit (or more accurately, berries).
- * Store at room temperature away from direct sunlight, for use within 1 week after ripe. Refrigerate only if you can't use them before they spoil.
- * To ripen green tomatoes, place on a rack so that fruits are not touching and set in a warm location 65-70°F away from sunlight. To slow ripening of green tomatoes, store in a cooler location 50-55°F.

Websites for Healthy Eating:

USDA: www.myplate.gov

Cornell University Food & Nutrition Education in Communities (FNEC): <https://fnec.cornell.edu/>

PREPARE

- * Wash tomatoes before preparing. Rub briskly under clean running water.
- * Remove any black spots or bruises.
- * It's best to peel and/or cut tomatoes just before use.

Healthy Tomato Vinaigrette: In a blender, combine a chopped tomato, 2 Tablespoons of vinegar (white wine or balsamic), 1 Tablespoon olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard, and your favorite herbs (basil, thyme etc). Enjoy.

Quick Tomato Salad: Quarter tomatoes and marinate with onion in your favorite low-fat vinaigrette. Add some sliced cucumber for some extra crunch.

Stuffed Tomato: Stuff a tomato with low-fat cottage cheese or with beans, tuna, shrimp, or chicken salad. Use the pulp as part of the salad.

Stewed Tomato Side Dish: Sauté 1 small diced onion in 1 Tablespoon olive oil. Mix in dried or chopped fresh basil and a dash of salt and pepper. Add coarsely chopped, peeled tomatoes (about 6); and simmer for 5 minutes.

Tangy Salsa: Mix together chopped fresh tomatoes, finely chopped jalapeno peppers, chopped cucumber, 1 small onion, chopped cilantro, and lime juice.

Baked Tomato Side Dish: Slice tomatoes about 1/2-inch thick. Sprinkle with seasoned breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Bake at 350°F until tomatoes are almost soft.

Raw Tomato Topping: Slice fresh tomatoes and top your pizza.

PRESERVE

- * **Canning tomatoes:** To ensure safe acidity in whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice per quart. Process in hot water bath canner 35 minutes for pints or 45 minutes for quarts. Use only disease-free, preferably vine-ripened, firm fruit. Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines.
- * **Freezing tomatoes:** Select firm, ripe tomatoes. Wash and dip in boiling water for 30 seconds to remove skins. Core and peel. Freeze whole or in pieces. Pack into containers. Seal and freeze. Use only for cooking or seasoning since tomatoes will not be solid when thawed.

Food Preservation Websites:

National Center for Home Food

Preservation: www.homefoodpreservation.com

CCE Herkimer County Food Preservation

Resources: <http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/food-preservation-resources/>

RECYCLE * COMPOST

- * Do not add diseased tomatoes or tomato plants to your compost pile.
- * Disease free tomato scraps provide a rich nitrogen source, nutrients and moisture to your compost.
- * Vegetable scraps are the "green" additions to your compost.

Composting Resources:

Cornell Waste Management Institute:

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/resources.htm>

Composting at Home publication:

<http://cwmi.ccs.cornell.edu/smallscale.htm>

No-Cook Fresh Tomato Sauce

- 1-1/2 pounds plum tomatoes, chopped (approximately 5 cups)
- 1/3 cup diced fresh part-skim mozzarella (optional)
- 3 Tablespoons reduced fat Italian dressing
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- ground black pepper, to taste

Combine tomatoes, mozzarella, Italian dressing and garlic. Add Italian seasoning and pepper, to taste. Let stand to allow tomatoes to release their juices. Serve over hot pasta. Refrigerate leftovers.

Variations: Serve over cooked pasta as a pasta salad, or spoon over garlic toast for an appetizer. Also great in meatloaf.

Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (15 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 65 mg sodium)

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Herkimer County Farmers' Markets

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/local-farmers-markets/>



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 **HERKIMER COUNTY
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Creating Healthy Places

TOMATOES

