



Growing Tomatoes Successfully

Every gardener knows that home grown tomatoes simply taste better.

In temperate climates like Melbourne, the best months to plant tomatoes are September to December. Tomatoes grow well in light through to heavy soils. They require a good drainage, the addition of organic matter such as compost and decaying animal manure, adequate water and regular fertilizing.

The tomato plant will produce a strong frame and lots of leaf growth by using nitrogen based (N) fertilizer. When the fruit starts to set after flowering, apply a potassium (K) fertilizer as this will increase your yield of fruit.

Tomatoes should be grown on stakes or in frames about two metres in length.

- The ideal site for tomato plants is in full sun, protected from strong winds.
- Plant seedlings deeply (not the grafted ones). This will help to produce stronger plants.
- Shake the plants when flowering to encourage pollination.
- Grafted tomatoes are best grown in the ground and trained on a supporting trellis. There is no need to prune.
- Seedling tomatoes can be grown in the ground or pots. Pinch out half the laterals as the plant grows to lighten the plant.
- Fertilise adequately so that they grow quickly. This results in less bitter tomatoes. Use liquid fertilizer high in potassium eg. Phostrogen and an all purpose fertilizer every week after the first truss of fruit.
- Water regularly, but don't water after 3pm. This allows enough drying time, reducing the risk of fungal disease and bacterial spot.

