



TOMATOES & BLOSSOM END ROT

No matter how you slice it, fresh tomatoes are a sure sign of summer. Here's a few tips to understanding and growing great tomatoes.

- Bushy tomatoes that don't need support and develop clusters of blossoms and fruit at the stem tips are called "determinate tomatoes". These plants produce lots of fruit in a very short period of time, then usually die soon afterwards. "Vigorous determinates" produce a heavy crop all at once, but do not die afterwards. If you prune them back and feed them, they will produce a light second crop. "Indeterminate" varieties produce fruit all summer long, and usually require staking, tying or supporting.
- Put your tomato supports in place when the plants are young, preferably when you first plant them. There are many choices, from stakes to cages to anything you can come up with to support them.
- To get the best yield from your planting, look for types that do well in your area, and that are disease resistant. The letters V, F, & N that are often on the plant tags, stand for different diseases that those plants are resistant to. Many of the older tomatoes, such as Brandywine or Mortgage Lifter are extremely hardy ones, but they don't produce as much as the newer hybrids. Heirloom plants like Brandywine usually taste better than most of the modern varieties, but they're pretty ugly!
- Paste tomatoes and plum tomatoes are great if you make a lot of Italian sauces. Grape and cherry tomatoes are excellent for salads or for eating right off the vine.
- Be sure to feed tomatoes every once in a while, using a low nitrogen fertilizer such as Espoma's Tomato Tone.
- The biggest insect problem that tomatoes have, is the tomato hornworm. It's an ugly horned, lime green caterpillar that you won't want to touch! They can be eradicated by handpicking, or by applying Sevin or Bt. If you don't get rid of them, they will eat every part of the tomato plant, including the fruit.
- If you've had a problem with black spots appearing on the bottom of the fruit, then you have a calcium deficiency in the soil. Add a handful of lime to the hole when you plant, or spray later in the season with a Blossom End Rot Spray.

THIS IS BLOSSOM END ROT



Poison Control: 1800-222-1222
While tomatoes are not poisonous—
The plants are!!!