

GROWING TOMATOES FROM SEED

GETTING STARTED

TOMATO SEEDS SHOULD BE STARTED 6-8 WEEKS BEFORE THE LAST SPRING FROST. PLANTING SEEDS CAN BE DONE MARCH 25TH, 2 OR 3 DAYS EITHER WAY WILL BE OK AS WELL.

MOISTEN YOUR SEED STARTING MIX WITH A SPRAY BOTTLE OF WATER, IT MAKES THE MIX EASIER TO WORK WITH AND THE SEEDS ADHERE BETTER.

LABEL YOUR SEED PACKETS WITH #'S OR THE NAME OF TOMATO. MARK YOUR PLANT LABELS WITH APPROPRIATE #'S OR PLANT NAMES FILL EACH CELL ALMOST TO THE TOP, AND PUT 2-3 SEEDS IN EACH CELL. TOP WITH APPROX. 1 TBSP OF MIX

IF USING DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF TOMATOES JUST WORK ON ONE CELL AT A TIME, MEANING, PLANT SEEDS AND INSERT PLANT LABEL IMMEDIATELY.

BOTTOM WATER YOUR TRAY OF SEEDS, ALSO ADD A SMALL AMT TO TOP. COVER THE SEEDED CONTAINER WITH PLASTIC WRAP OR PUT IN A PLASTIC BAG, THIS WILL KEEP THE SOIL MOIST. FROM THIS POINT ON, YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR SEEDS MOIST, AND WARM. NO LIGHT IS REQUIRED AT THIS TIME.

A HEATING PAD WORKS WELL, YOU MAY WANT TO PUT A TOWEL OVER THE PAD IF YOUR HEATING PAD RUNS A LITTLE TOO WARM. A TEMP OF 70-75 DEGREES IS IDEAL. BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR SOIL, DON'T ALLOW SOIL TO DRY OUT, AND YOU WILL BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF SPROUTING. SEEDS GENERALLY SPROUT IN 5-6 DAYS. THE SPROUTED SEEDS WILL NEED TO BE UNDER BRIGHT LIGHTS AS SOON AS YOU CAN SEE THEM EMERGING, THEY WILL NEED 14-16 HOURS OF LIGHT AND NEED TO BE FAIRLY CLOSE TO LIGHT SOURCE.

EARLY SEEDLING GROWTH

JUST KEEP AN EYE ON THE SOIL, LET SOIL DRY OUT SOME BUT NOT TO THE POINT OF SEEDLING WILTING AND WATER ACCORDINGLY. 7-10 DAYS THE SECOND SET OF LEAVES OR TRUE LEAVES WILL APPEAR. SEEDLINGS ARE GROWING NICELY AND FORMING A GOOD ROOT SYSTEM. WHEN THEY HAVE THEIR TRUE LEAVES IT IS NOW TIME TO REPOT INTO A 4" POT. THEY CAN NOW GO INTO A GOOD ORGANIC POTTING MIX. PLANT EACH SEEDLING DEEPLY INTO NEW POT. WATER AND LABEL. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO NEED 14-16 HRS OF LIGHT.

ACCLIMATING OR HARDENING OFF

WHEN PLANTS ARE APPROXIMATELY A FOOT TALL AND TRULY LOOKING LIKE TOMATO PLANTS IT IS TIME TO TAKE THEM OUTSIDE. THIS HELPS TOUGHEN THEM FOR THE OUTSIDE GARDEN. THE FIRST DAY YOU WANT TO KEEP THEM OUT OF DIRECT SUNLIGHT AND SHELTERED FROM WINDY CONDITIONS. DO THIS FOR ABOUT AN HOUR OR SO. AND BACK UNDER BRIGHT LIGHTS. GRADUALLY EXPOSE THEM TO SUNLIGHT AND BREEZES, THIS WILL STRENGTHEN THEIR STEMS. YOU WILL GET TO A POINT WHERE THEY CAN STAY OUTDOORS THE ENTIRE DAY, IF TOO COOL AT NITE, IF TEMPS. ARE BELOW 50 DEGREES BRING PLANTS BACK INSIDE. BY THIS TIME YOUR PLANTS SHOULD BE JUST ABOUT READY TO BE TRANSPLANTED INTO THEIR NEW GARDEN HOMES!

PLANTING

PLANT DEEP, IF NECESSARY PINCH OFF BOTTOM LEAVES. THIS WILL ENSURE A REALLY GOOD ROOT SYSTEM. ALSO, PACK DOWN SOIL LIGHTLY BUT FIRMLY SO ROOTS HAVE GOOD CONTACT WITH THE SOIL.

THE END

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GILLETTE

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