

Tomatillos

EHT-162

04/21

The tomatillo or husk tomato (*Physalis ixocarpa*) looks much like a tomato. The fruit is generally green but can be orange, yellow, red, or even purple. It is enclosed in a papery wrapping called a calyx. The condition of the calyx is commonly used as an indicator of freshness in fresh markets. Native to Mexico and Guatemala, tomatillos are sensitive to cold. The best growing conditions are 80 to 90°F. days with 60 to 70°F. nights, low humidity, and sparse rainfall. Typically they are grown like tomatoes in Texas.

Grow it

Varieties

- 'Cape Gooseberry,' 'Golden Nugget,' 'Mayan Husk Tomato,' 'Mexican Husk,' and others

Planting

- Tomatillos can be grown from transplants or seeds.
- Plant transplants every 2 feet in rows 5 feet apart.
- If you are starting with seeds, plant 3 or 4 tomatillo seeds 2 feet apart. When the plants reach 4 to 5 inches tall, thin them to one plant every 2 feet.



Insects & Diseases

- Tomatillos rarely have insect pests or diseases.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

Harvesting

- The plants begin bearing fruit 65 to 85 days after seeding or transplanting and continue for 1 to 2 months, or until the first frost.
- Pick fruits just as the husk (or calyx) bursts.

Use it

Salsa Verde

Course: Side Dish

Serves: 16

Ingredients

10 tomatillos
1 to 2 serrano peppers
½ bunch fresh cilantro
salt, to taste

Instructions

Wash and dry tomatillos and serrano peppers. Place on a cookie sheet and broil in the oven on low heat. You can also roast on a griddle or comal (cast iron pan) on medium heat, or try it on your BBQ grill. Turn tomatillos and peppers consistently so they do not burn, but let them get a rich brown color. Place tomatillos and peppers in a blender or food processor. Process to a chunky texture. Add fresh cilantro and blend again.

Enjoy your flavorful tangy salsa! Makes 3 ½ to 4 cups. You can adjust the amount of peppers to your liking—mild, medium, or hot.



full sun



well-drained soil