

Tomatoes

HORT-PU-163

September 2023

Rachel Fuqua, Julia Minter, Lisa Whittlesey, Jayla Fry,
Larry Stein, and Robert "Skip" Richter

Tomatoes are the most popular garden vegetable crop in Texas and can be cooked and used in many ways. They are popular in salads, sliced, and on sandwiches. They are a good source of vitamin A and fair source of vitamin C.

🌱 Grow it

Varieties

- Celebrity is the best overall round red variety, followed by BHN 968 as a cherry.

Soil Preparation

- Mix organic material into the top 4 to 6 inches of soil or incorporate it into the planting container.

Planting

- Buy healthy, green transplants that are 6 to 8 inches tall.
- Set out spring tomato plants after the danger of frost has passed or be prepared to cover them.
- For fall tomatoes, plant in the garden about 100 days before the first expected frost.
- Plant each transplant slightly deeper than it had been growing previously.

Fertilizing

- Fertilize every 3 to 4 weeks with 1 level tablespoon of 15-5-10 fertilizer.

Watering

- Water the tomato plants slowly and deeply to help them develop a strong root system.
- Do not let the tomatoes wilt severely as yields and fruit quality will be low.

Care During the Season

- Mulching will help stop weed growth and water loss from the soil.
- You can let tomatoes grow on the ground or support them with stakes or cages.
- Removing weeds from around your plants will help them stay healthy.

Harvesting

- Pick them when they are pink, let them ripen at room temperature. Once fully ripe they can be stored in the refrigerator.

Insects and Diseases

- The most common problems are typically late or early blight and tomato pinworms.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.



Sun:
6 hours



Soil:
Well-
drained



Planting:
Warm



Harvest:
Summer/Fall



Life Cycle:
Annual



Container
Friendly

Buy it

- Choose tomatoes with bright, shiny skins and firm flesh.

Use it

Grape Tomato and Cilantro Salad

Course: Side Dish Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 cups grape tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ green onion, chopped
- Fresh chopped cilantro

Instructions:

Wash your hands and clean your cooking area.

Wash the grape tomatoes and cut them in half.

Transfer tomatoes to medium serving bowl.

Drizzle olive oil over tomatoes. Stir to coat the tomatoes with the oil.

Add the green onion and fresh cilantro to taste. Stir.

Store it

- Store at room temperature away from direct sunlight, for use within 1 week after ripening.
- Tomatoes taste best if not refrigerated.
- Refrigerate only if you can't use them before they spoil.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit nchfp.uga.edu.

Rosemary Vegetable Skewers

Course: Kid Friendly, Side Dish, Snacks, Vegetables Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- ½ pint cherry tomatoes, rinsed
- 1 squash, rinsed and sliced into ¼- to ½-inch rounds
- 1 zucchini, rinsed and sliced into ¼- to ½-inch rounds
- 1 orange bell pepper, rinsed and sliced into ¾-inch squares
- 4 ounces mushrooms, rinsed and wiped clean
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 lemon (lemon juice and zest)
- 1 Tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped

Instructions:

Soak wooden skewers in water for 20 minutes.

Combine olive oil, lemon zest and juice, and rosemary. Set aside.

Heat oven broiler to high.

Remove wooden skewers from water and begin to alternate the threading of tomatoes, squash, zucchini, bell pepper, and mushroom.

Place vegetable skewers on rimmed baking sheet and brush with lemon-herb oil.

Place under broiler for 5 min. Remove and carefully flip skewers (they will be hot). Place back in oven and broil another 5-7 min.

NOTE: Carefully watch vegetables under broiler to avoid burning.

Learn about it

- Until the 1800s, tomatoes were thought to be poisonous as they are in same plant family as nightshade.
- Tomatoes are free of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- They are low in sodium and calories while being a recommended source of vitamins A and C and potassium.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture

