

Growing Tomatoes at Tahoe: Crib Notes

Determinate tomato varieties produce flowers and set fruit once in a short period of time

Indeterminate varieties produce a slower steady harvest over a longer period

Smaller sized tomatoes usually need less time to ripen

Start **seeds** indoors 6-8 week prior to last frost – March to early April

Seed bed soil temperature 65-75 degrees for germination

If buying plant choose short season varieties

Be sure to **weather harden** your transplants

Transplant to area with **warmth and sunlight**

If container planting use **dark colored** pots

Transplant to well drained fertile soil – pH just slightly acidic

Transplant seedling **deep into soil** at least to first leaf

Wait about 2 weeks before fertilizing

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For Tahoe/Truckee or similar cool short season areas – keep plants warm

When transplanting, open planting hole a day or two in advance to warm soil

If container planting use **dark colored** pots

Plant on **south facing** exposure - avoid north exposures if possible

Consider **planting horizontally** nearer to surface (warmer soil)

Plant near fence or wall for **radiated evening warmth**

Consider planting through perforated **clear or red tinted plastic**

Consider placing large rock, gallon jug of colored water, or water curtain around plant

Do not place mulch around plant base (cools soil)

Schedule watering for late morning or early afternoon (water is warmer)

Consider covering plants at night when flowering if temperature drop below 45

Cover plants at any sign of frost

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Provide trellis or other means to support plant

Remove any suckering stems

Remove any excessive flower sets (many flowers delays ripening)

Fertilize ever 2-3 weeks with 5-5-5 or equivalent 1 pound/100 square ft.

If plant looks very robust but not setting fruit stop fertilizing and cut back watering

A slightly stressed plant often will set more flowers/fruit

Pests and disease

Aphids – Spray plant with soapy water solution

Hornworms – hand pick and squash

Whiteflies – Spray plant with soapy water solution

Powdery mildew – water less and earlier in day

Crown rot – water less and not directly at stem area

Bottom fruit rot – possibly from overhead watering methods

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Harvest and end of season tips

Frost damaged fruit usually cannot be saved – try using immediately cutting out damaged portions

To ripen green tomatoes remove whole bract and ripen in paper bag with apple/banana

Remove as much of plant as possible to assist in fruit ripening

Consider pulling up whole plant and end of year to ripen the last tomatoes.

Avoid composting old tomato plants – dispose of plant materials

Try not to plant tomatoes/potatoes/peppers or eggplants in same garden location successive years.