

# Tomato Facts & Fancies

## Growing The Best Tomatoes In Your Neighborhood

(NAPSA)—Think of all the things that you can make with tomatoes—sandwiches, salads, pizza and pasta. Many people just like to eat them raw with a little salt on top.

According to the National Gardening Association, growing tomatoes is the most popular form of vegetable gardening. About 86 percent of vegetable gardeners are growing tomatoes in their backyards.

“Tomatoes can be grown in containers or in the garden,” said Lance Walheim, co-author of the “Sunset Vegetable Gardening” book and gardening expert for Bayer Advanced™. “Growing your own will help you save money and give you fresh, homegrown flavor.”

### Selection

- Choose your tomato. Varieties range from small cherry tomatoes to the big, juicy “Beefsteak.” You can also grow yellow tomatoes that are sweet and have a low acid content or heirloom varieties that have incredible flavor.

### Growing Tips

- Seeds should be grown indoors in containers in a well-lit area six to eight weeks before planting outdoors. Or you can start with transplants or seedlings that you buy from your neighborhood garden center. Plant outside when there’s no danger of frost.

- Do a soil test to make sure your garden has the best pH for success.

- Choose the sunniest spot. Tomatoes need about eight hours



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of direct sunlight in rich, well-drained soil. Start with a 3' x 10' plot.

- Plant seedlings deep, up to the top two to four leaves.

- Control destructive pests and diseases. Aphids, mites, leafhoppers, powdery mildew, blight and leaf spot are the kinds of pests and diseases that can damage or destroy your tomatoes. Bayer Advanced Natria Insect, Disease & Mite Control kills harmful insects on contact and controls diseases ([www.BayerAdvanced.com](http://www.BayerAdvanced.com)). Always read and follow label directions.

- Deep, infrequent watering is key. Stick your finger four inches into the soil. If it’s dry, then water. One inch of water will wet sandy soil a foot deep and clay soil about five inches deep.

- Organic mulch helps keep the weeds out and helps keep moisture in.

- Apply nitrogen fertilizer regularly, especially when plants are young. Cut back when they’re about to bloom.

- Support plants by tying to stakes or growing in tomato cages.