



TOMATO TALK

Sponsored by the Rochester
Public Library Seed Library

July 21, 2021



AGENDA FOR JULY:

- Reminder: Pruning & Fertilizing
- Harvesting
- Preserving
- Recipes

PRUNING: THE STEM



- Early Blight is a common fungal disease in tomatoes
- The fungal spores are thought to reach the leaves of the tomato from soil splashing during rain events or watering
 - Removal of the lowest leaves can greatly delay Early Blight
 - Pruning lower leaves also increases air flow through the plant

PRUNING: SUCKERS

“Sucker” : New growth that forms in the space between the stem and a leaf.

Suckers DON'T need to be pruned from determinate tomatoes.

Pruning some of the suckers on indeterminate tomatoes will

- Increase airflow and reduce disease
- Prevent unruly sprawl and trellis toppling
- Encourage more and earlier tomatoes



FERTILIZING

- Fertilize when you originally plant the tomato
- Fertilize established plants by “side dressing” with a balanced fertilizer about every 3-4 weeks through the harvest.
- Organic Tomato-tone fertilizer is a good option available locally.



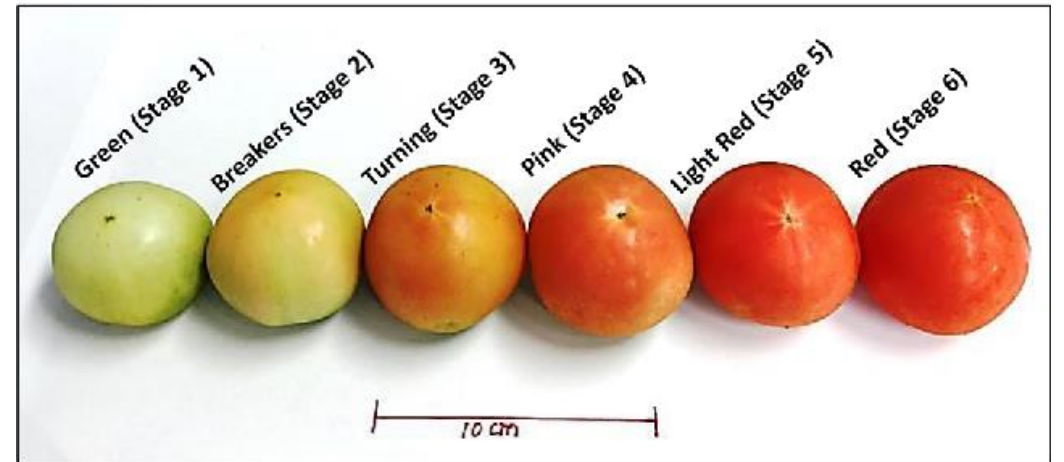
HARVESTING

- Fully ripe tomatoes on the vine are beautiful, but many things can go wrong if you leave tomatoes on the vine that long. They can split from excessive water uptake.



- They can be damaged by bugs, birds, or other animals that are attracted to their bright color.

HARVESTING



- You can harvest tomatoes at their “breaker stage”. This is the point at which the tomato will continue to ripen whether or not it is on the vine. This stage is at about 30% blush. This is probably easiest to determine on red or other dark tomatoes. Trickier for yellow tomatoes or tomatoes that remain green when fully ripe.
- According to Craig LeHoullier, author of “Epic Tomatoes”, there is no difference in flavor, quality or nutrition between vine-ripened and “countertop” ripened.

PRESERVING

- Canning in a water bath canner is very common and easy. No pressure canning required if only canning tomatoes.
- Dehydrating is a great way to preserve cherry tomatoes or Roma/paste tomatoes. These smaller types of tomatoes can usually just be cut in half and placed cut side up on the dehydrator tray. Process until completely dry and crispy. These are a nice snack or can be added to recipes, whole, broken up into pieces, or even powdered.



Be sure to collect the seeds before processing if you want to save seeds for next year!



PRESERVING

- Freezing is an easy and quick method of processing. After washing, simply remove the core and cut the tomatoes in halves or quarter and freeze in ziplock bags. When the tomatoes are later thawed, the skins will slip right off.
- Roasting and freezing:

Drizzle olive oil in a baking pan and add garlic, sliced onion, and tomato halves placed face down. Roast at 400 degrees for 30 minutes. Add oregano and basil and roast for 10 more minutes. Allow to cool and pull the skins off the tomatoes. Drain off and reserve the excess liquid. Place veggies in a bowl and mash with a fork or immersion blender. Add salt, pepper, and maybe a little sugar to taste. Add back as much of the reserve liquid as needed. Eat over pasta! Or freeze.



Bruschetta

Mix together:

2 cups chopped tomatoes

1 Tbsp. minced garlic

1 Tbsp. olive oil

1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning

½ - 1 tsp. salt

Best served within 30-60 minutes at room temperature. Serve on slices of French bread.

QUICK RECIPES

Caprese Salad

On a platter, layer:

Sliced tomato

Sliced fresh mozzarella

Fresh basil leaves

Sprinkle with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Also delicious with balsamic glaze which is simply ½ c. of balsamic vinegar and 1 ½ tsp of honey whisked and heated on medium heat until it thickens to thin syrup consistency.





FINAL TOMATO TALK:

- Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
- We'll talk about saving seeds from your tomatoes.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?