



Growing Tomatoes in a kitchen garden

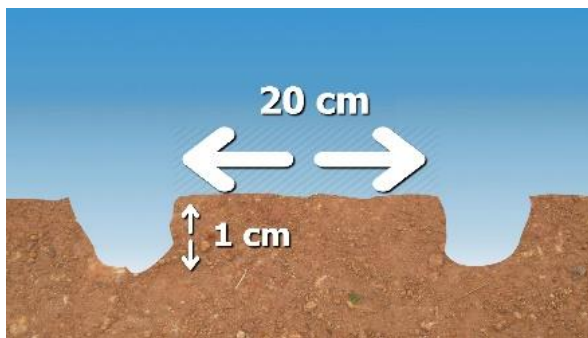
Tomatoes are a widely grown crop both by small and large scale farmers. It can be grown on open fields or in a greenhouse. The crop takes 2-3 months to mature, depending on the variety.

Getting Seedlings

Raising in a Nursery

You can raise the seedling in a nursery for 3-4 weeks. Make raised nursery beds 1 m wide, and 15cm above the ground.

Mix well-rotted manure into the soil.



Sow the seeds in lines 20 cm apart and 1 cm deep. Cover lightly with soil and use dried grass as mulch.

They are then transplanted to the field when the seedlings are about 15–25 cm tall and/or with 3 - 5 leaves.

Only healthy seedlings are transplanted with a ball of soil to minimize root damage.



Buying from Nurseries

Because of the few numbers of seedlings needed in a kitchen garden, you can buy seedlings from registered nurseries.



Planting

Prepare the Kitchen garden plot well and remove weeds

- Dig planting holes $\frac{1}{2}$ foot deep at a spacing of $1 \frac{1}{2}$ feet from one hole to another in a row with rows 2 feet apart.
- In each hole, put a handful of well rotten manure and 5g (bottle top) of planting fertilizer like Mavuno Planting NPK 10.26.10 then mix well with soil.
- Plant a healthy tomato seedling in each hole.
- Water and then mulch with dry grass to conserve moisture in the soil.
- Drench with Pearl and Control 70DF to control early pests and diseases.

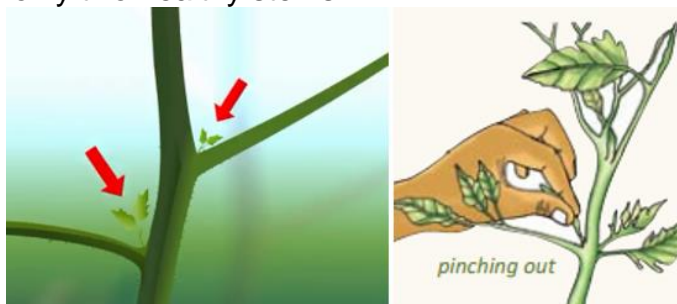


Management

The following are the key field management practices that need to be done in a tomato field:



- Keep field weed free by weeding every 3 – 4 weeks. Weeds compete for nutrients with your tomato crop and hide pests and diseases.
- Topdress two times. After 1 month use Nitrogen rich fertilizer like Mavuno Topdressing Booster NPK 26.0.0 or CAN. A month later topdress with NPK 17:17:17 or 20:20:20.
- In addition, use foliar feeds rich in potassium at flowering stage e.g. Easy Gro Fruit and Flower from Osho for higher yields and better quality fruits.
- Prune by removing side shoots, excess suckers and lateral stem to remain with only two healthy stems.





- Stake to support tomato plants especially with weak stems or due to excessive bearing. Use a string to tie loosely the stem to the stake. This will ensure you get clean fruits, disease free and make harvesting easy. Simple staking can be done by driving a 2m stick into the ground next to each plant and tying them together using a string.



- Control pests and diseases. Common pests include Whiteflies, Leafminers, Aphids, Red spider mites and worms. Diseases include: Blight, Powdery mildew and Bacterial wilt.

Harvesting

Tomatoes will mature after 3-4 months after transplanting.

- Only Harvest mature tomatoes. Immature green tomatoes will ripen poorly and be of low quality.
- To harvest tomato, grasp a ripened tomato gently and firmly. Twist it until it snaps off the vine.

Pests and Disease Control

Do not grow Tomato after crops of the same family like potato, capsicum, eggplant. These are attacked by same pests and diseases which could hide in the soil or crop trash.

Rotate or plant after legumes (beans etc.) or cereals (maize etc.)