



10 TIPS FOR GROWING HEALTHY, GREAT-TASTING TOMATOES

- 1.** Start seed in containers about 6 weeks before the last spring frost.
- 2.** Wait until the last frost has finished before planting out. Tomatoes hate wet feet, so plant in fertile, deep, well-drained soil.
- 3.** Test your soil pH before planting. A pH of 6.0–7.0 is best.
- 4.** Know your tomato varieties! Do they need to be staked or can they be allowed to sprawl? Plant seedlings 60-90cm apart if they are going to be allowed to sprawl, 38cm apart if they are to be staked or caged.
- 5.** For stronger plants, bury the stem horizontally, up to the topmost leaves.
- 6.** Don't mulch until the ground has had a chance to warm up.
- 7.** Water regularly, but don't fertilise until the plant is well established and in full blossom. Then feed with weak compost tea or fish emulsion.
- 8.** Did you know that soluble aspirin can be used to boost your tomato plants' immune system? The salicylic acid in aspirin is believed to improve the plants' disease resistance, yield and quality of fruit. Spray young plants with a diluted solution – approximately half a soluble tablet per 900ml of water.
- 9.** Rotating your crops will help to reduce the risk of disease. Good companion plants include asparagus, celery, parsley, basil, carrots, chives, marigolds, garlic.
- 10.** Heat stress makes your plants more vulnerable to disease, so be sure to provide shade. Avoid planting in areas that get many hours of afternoon sun. Use shadecloth with 30%–50% light exclusion.

