

DOWN TO EARTH

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Tomatoes can be tricky little devils, they like to be warm but not frozen, well watered but not drowned. The best place is in the soil of a greenhouse, however you can only do this once as you would have to sterilise the soil every year, expensive.

You could use a large pot or bucket with holes in it and a good compost (never ever use soil from the garden - **for anything**).



You could grow them in water (Hydroponics) where the plants sit in a channel of running water

and take up nutrients as the water circulates. At the end of the cycle you need to replace the nutrients and remove the build up of salts. This is the default method for most commercial growers.

Tomato plants grow very quickly and can run to more than 20 trusses per plant, these



growers can crop over 300,000 lbs of tomatoes per acre, that's a lot of salad and tomato sandwiches. The most popular method by far is grow bags. First used by the commercial grower in the 1970s, made by Fisons and filled with very good compost. When the public started to clamour for them they changed the colour to yellow

TOMATO FACT SHEET

and trebled the price, however millions are sold every year. It's best to start with a



grow tray that fits under the bag, you could just cut three holes and plant direct into the bag but it is better to place three pots

without bottoms on top the holes you have cut, fill with a good compost and plant into them.

Tomatoes have come a long way in 20 yrs, you can now grow sizes from small cherry size to a 2 lb beefsteak fruit, besides the familiar reds you can also grow yellow, orange, striped (Tigerella) and black (Black Russian).



Two IMPORTANT facts to remember.

WATERING: Three tomato plants can take up to one gallon of water PER DAY, if they dry out say goodbye to your expensive dead plants.

VENTILATION: From June leave the doors windows and vents open day & night, 24 hours per day, to prevent A & B strains of mildew and Fusarium. A closed greenhouse can reach over 100°F in summer and boil your plants.



So why would you go to the expense and trouble to grow your own when there is a glut in July and August, and prices are low? Well if you've never gone into a greenhouse on a summers day and picked your own tomato licked it and sprinkled on a touch of salt and bitten on the sweet tangy flesh well you haven't



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