

HYANNIS COUNTRY GARDEN

Soil and Fertilizers

Tomatoes have a short summer to grow and develop fruit. Soil preparation, amendments, and fertilization are important for a good harvest.

Organic Matter: Adding compost or composted manure into the ground is important, especially for those who have sandy soils. These amendments hold water, nutrients and soil biology. Recommended: Coast of Maine Quoddy Compost or Moo Doo.

Fertilizer: There are several organic fertilizers that are perfect for tomatoes. Spread Plant-tone, Tomato-tone, Effective Organics 8-2-4, or Chickity Doo Doo according to directions before planting. Work into the soil with a shovel or tiller along with some organic matter.

Other good fertilizers and soil amendments include Tomato Thrive, Neptune's Harvest Fish and Seaweed Emulsion, and Effective Organics Bio-Matrix. Always apply to well watered plants and use according to directions.

Potting Soil: When growing tomatoes in pots or earth boxes, it's important to use a good quality potting soil. At Country Garden we grow our tomatoes in Espoma Organic Potting Soil. For best results in containers, don't use garden soil or the potting mix you planted in last year. (If you want to recycle last year's soil, mix it with some compost and use it for pots or boxes of flowers, not tomatoes.) Old potting mix can also be put in a compost pile or spread around shrubs.

Mulch: Mulch helps keep even levels of soil moisture around tomatoes. This helps to prevent the black scab on the tomatoes called blossom end rot. Mulch also keeps the weeds down, which means less work for you! Use straw, seaweed, or other organic matter or sheets of plastic or landscape fabric. If choosing plastic, lay soaker hoses underneath.

There are two methods of vegetable gardening: Till and No-Till. For the first method, soils are loosened every spring and amendments dug in. This makes it possible for roots to grow quickly, and to turn under small weeds. Those using the no-till method never walk on the growing beds so that the soil stays loose. Compost and manure are layered on top of the bed every year, with mulch after that. Use the method that works best for you. There are advantages to both methods.



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