

# HYANNIS COUNTRY GARDEN

## Tomato Problem Solvers

Here are some of the common problems people have when growing tomato plants, and suggested solutions.

**Insects:** The two most common insects on tomatoes are the Colorado Potato Beetle and Horn worms. The beetles are striped, tan or yellow and black. Most people notice horn worm damage or their droppings before they see the fat, green larvae. Use Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew (Spinosad), which is an organic insecticide.

**Blight:** The most common disease in this area is Early Blight. Symptoms include leaves that yellow from the bottom up, dark dots on those leaves, and black, dying vines. There is no cure for this blight but you can suppress the symptoms so that you're able to harvest tomatoes. Begin spraying with Serenade, Revitalize, or Copper fungicide. Use according to directions. If you've had the blight in the past, mulching right after planting is also helpful. Additionally, water plants deeply less often (not every day), water early in the day and use soaker hoses if possible. Pick off spotted or yellowing leaves and throw out.

**Curling Leaves:** Tomato leaves curl then they are under stress. The most common cause of this on the Cape is wind. No action is needed and plants usually grow out of it.

**Purple or White Foliage:** Either color is usually only seen when plants are very small. The purple indicates cold stress, and white is usually sun or wind burn. Don't plant tomatoes too early in the spring. The night time temperatures should be above 50 degrees to avoid purple leaves and stunted growth. To avoid sun burn, plant on a cloudy day, or harden off the leaves by exposing the plants gradually to the sun.

**Black Scab:** A black scab on the bottom of the tomato is from Blossom End Rot. This results from stress on the plant, usually because the plants have dried out reducing the root system. Keep soil evenly moist. Usually plants grow out of this once they are more mature. This problem does not mean the soil is low in calcium - that's an old myth.

**No Fruit:** Grow in full sun. If pollination is interrupted by rapid changes in weather, use Blossom Set.

Good cultural practices help you avoid problems. Grow several different varieties, keep soil evenly moist, fertilize regularly and inspect your plants frequently so you can catch difficulties early. If you're experiencing problems, bring a sample into the store so we can help with diagnosis and solutions.



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**[www.HyannisCountryGarden.com](http://www.HyannisCountryGarden.com)**