

SFA

Seeds for Africa

Tomato – *Lycopersicon Esculentum*

To plant your seeds, it is best to start them in peat pots (or similar pots for growing seedlings).

Fill your peat pot with the soil mix of your choice. One mix could be made using 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 coarse vermiculite, and 1/3 compost.

Place 2 to 3 seeds in each pot and cover with soil about 1/4 inch or so. Pat down lightly. Moisten the soil (do not drench) and keep it moist. It will take at least a week for the seed to germinate.

Place the peat pots in a warm, sunny place that is protected from cold weather. There are many ways you can do this. (Make your own mini green house, or put in a sunny window sill, etc.)

Check your pots every day. Once the plants peek out of the soil, they will grow pretty fast.

When the plants have grown several inches tall, and have at least 3 leaves on each plant, they are ready for transplanting. You can plant them in your garden as soon as all danger of frost is gone.

In your prepared garden space, dig a hole deep enough that you can plant your seedling deep enough that only the top 1/4 of the plant is sticking out of the ground. The stem will put out new roots and help establish a good root system for the plant. Place a hand full of compost in the bottom of the hole and place your plant on top of the compost. This will give your plant an extra boost, and also help keep the plant from going into shock from transplanting. Try not to disturb the roots in the transplanting process. However, you can break the bottom of the peat cup to allow the roots to freely grow out and down after planting.

Pour water in the hole after putting your plant in. Make sure you use room temperature water for this. Cold water from the outdoor hose will be too cold and may put your plant in shock.

Pull the dirt up to the stem of the plant, making sure you leave at least 1/4 of the top sticking out of the soil. Pat the dirt down lightly.

You can also drive your stake in the ground at this time, so when you need it, you will have it and won't disturb the root system by driving it in the ground after the root system has been established.

Use Green Guy Plant ties (Available from Seeds for Africa) to loosely tie your plant as needed. Just don't bind your plant by tying too tightly.

Feed and water your plant often. Tomatoes need water and food. Do this by watering at the base of the plant and using at least one gallon of water per plant every time you water.

Pruning is NOT necessary. Some people prune so their plant will produce larger fruits. However, the plant will not produce as many fruits this way.

Check your plants daily for bugs and cut worms. There are ways to prevent cut worms. One way is to put a collar around the base of the plant. This needs to be done when the plant is very young and small. You can make the collar out of toilet paper rolls or paper towel rolls. Cut the toilet paper rolls in half, and the paper towel rolls into 3 or 4 pieces. Make a cut up the side and open it up and place it around the plant stem, pressing it into the soil to keep it stable.

When the fruit turns red (or whatever colour you planted), pick and enjoy the fruits of your labour. When you do, you will know that it was all worth it.

© Seeds for Africa Limited

No part of this document may be reproduced, copied or distributed without the express written permission of the Directors of Seeds for Africa Limited.

www.seedsforafrica.co.za

Seeds for Africa