

Example packets



What you will need

- Johnsons seeds
- Seed trays or pots
- Compost
- Grow bags or large pots
- Support such as tall canes
- Tomato food



Johnsons
GROWING WITH CONFIDENCE SINCE 1820

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A quick guide to

FREE



Hints and Tips

- Be sure to water plants regularly to prevent the tomato skins from splitting and feed weekly with a tomato feed once the first trusses of fruit begin to form.

- When transplanting young tomato plants, bury them deeper into the pot than their original position. The level of the compost can come almost up to the first set of leaves. The stems will then develop new roots higher up the stem helping to secure and feed the plants as they grow.
- If you are staking the plants, do it immediately after transplanting to minimise the risk of damaging new roots later on.
- If growing tomatoes in grow bags, be sure to loosen any compacted compost by shaking the bag thoroughly before use.
- To give roots extra growing space in grow bags, plant them into large bottomless pots of compost set on top of the grow bags. Cut a hole in the top of the grow bag the same diameter as the base of the pot for a snug fit.
- If growing plants outside, mulch the ground around them once the soil has fully warmed up. This will help to conserve the moisture and suppress the weeds.
- If the lower leaves discolour or die off, remove them to prevent



disease. They are best burnt or put into the green waste bin rather than on the compost heap.

- If your indoor tomatoes regularly have problems with disease, then thoroughly clean and disinfect your greenhouse or polytunnel

and try a modern variety which has been bred for improved resistance to diseases such as Tomato Mosaic Virus, Verticillium and Fusarium.

- Freeze surplus fruit as sauces, tomato juice or as whole fruit. Alternatively store them preserved as chutneys or ketchup.
- At the end of the season, the ripening of any outdoor tomatoes that are still on the plant can be hastened by bending the plants over to lie horizontally on a bed of dry straw, pinning them down with sturdy 'U' shaped pieces of wire and covering them with cloches.
- Outdoor grown bush varieties should be pulled up before the first frosts. The plants can be hung upside down indoors to allow any remaining fruits to ripen.
- Interplanting tomato plants with marigolds (Tagetes) may help to deter pests such as whitefly. Other good companion plants are basil, chives, onions and nasturtiums. Tomatoes do not grow well alongside cabbages and other brassicas.

Recipes

Pasta Sauce:

Remove the tomato skin (blanching in boiling water makes for easier peeling). Heat olive oil in a pan and add the tomatoes, simmer until the flesh is soft and reduced. Sieve out the seeds if desired. Add a splash of balsamic vinegar, oregano, thyme, salt and pepper to taste.

Beefsteak Tomato Sandwich:

Top thick slices of rye bread with sliced beefsteak tomato, then slices of red onion, cucumber

and avocado. Finally top the stack with a handful of alfalfa sprouts and drizzle with honey mustard dressing.

Roasted Cherry Tomato:

Arrange cherry tomatoes in a single layer on a baking tray. Drizzle with good olive oil and season with salt. If desired spear the top of each tomato with a long thin sliver of garlic. Bake in a medium oven until the tomatoes just begin to wrinkle. Sprinkle with freshly chopped basil and serve immediately.



Types of Tomatoes

There are an incredible number of different tomatoes available to choose from, there are variations in the growth habit of the plant as well as the size, shape, colour and flavour of the fruit.

Tomato plants are often referred to as being determinate or indeterminate, this is a term used to describe their growth habit.

Determinate tomatoes generally form compact, bushy plants which do not require the removal of side shoots.

Indeterminate tomatoes keep on growing, resulting in tall vine-like plants which require support. The side shoots need pinching out so the plant only develops a single main stem. This is done to ensure that plants don't produce too many unnecessary leaves, become too large and unmanageable, and that enough energy gets to the main trusses to produce good crops of tomatoes.

The physical characteristics of the fruits are categorised in various ways. **Cherry** tomatoes, as the name suggests are small, generally round fruits which typically have a wonderfully sweet flavour, great for simple snacks and salads or roasting. **Standard** tomatoes are somewhat larger, medium sized fruits, often beautifully aromatic with a well balanced acid-sweet flavour, perfect for salads, sandwiches and sauces. **Beefsteak** tomatoes are the largest type, with meaty flesh that usually has a more mellow flavour. Perfect for cooking and slicing for burgers or sandwiches. Other categories include **Plum** tomatoes, a traditional cooking type that is most often used for Italian sauces and comes in various sizes, and **Grape** tomatoes; a more recent introduction, with very sweet, slightly smaller and more elongated fruits than a cherry tomato.



Tomatoes



A determinate cherry tomato in a patio container

Where

Tomatoes originate from South America and therefore benefit from a long and warm growing season. When grown in the UK, they need to be sown indoors early in the year to give them the long growing season they require.

Some tomatoes require more warmth than others, these are best grown in a warm greenhouse, others are suitable for growing outside. Tall indeterminate varieties need large pots or grow bags and require support.

The small and bushy determinate varieties can easily be grown in patio containers or even hanging baskets.

How

Seeds should be sown indoors into pots or trays, usually between January and March. Tomatoes to be grown outside benefit from a late sowing, ensuring that the weather is warm enough by the time the young plants are ready to plant out. The seeds should be lightly covered with fine soil and watered gently so they are not disturbed. Make certain the pots and trays



are clean and be sure to use fresh seed compost. To aid germination, the pots or trays should be kept at approx. 15-20°C and covered with glass, polythene or a propagator lid to help keep the compost moist. The cover should be removed when seedlings appear. Don't forget to use your free Johnsons seed label to identify the variety sown.

Care

The seedlings should be carefully transplanted to further pots or trays when they're large enough to handle. Always hold seedlings by a leaf so you don't risk crushing the stem. They can then grow on until they are large enough to plant out to greenhouse borders, pots or grow bags. Before planting outdoor types, the young plants must be acclimatised to outside conditions by being placed in a sheltered location for a few hours during the day. The time spent outside should be gradually increased over the next

two weeks (avoid frosts). They can then be planted out to their final growing position at the spacing indicated on the packet, or into patio pots, grow bags or a prepared bed in a sunny location. Indeterminate types will need support, either with canes or string tied to an overhead frame. They will also need to have the side shoots pinched out regularly, these appear between a leaf node and the main stem. The growing tip at the very top of the plant also needs to be removed when 6-7 trusses have set.



Pinching out side shoots of an indeterminate tomato



Harvesting

Tomatoes grown indoors in a greenhouse or a polytunnel will generally be ready to harvest from June to October, outdoor tomatoes from August onwards.

Please see the back of the seed packets for more specific growing instructions.

