

## Some Common Problems when Growing Tomatoes

Tomatoes are one of the most popular vegetables grown in home gardens. Tomatoes are native to South American in the region between Peru and Mexico. Around 500 BC the Aztecs in Mexico domesticated the tomatoe and the Spanish brought tomato seeds to Euproe in the 16th century. Europeans were afraid to eat the tomato at first because of its relationship to deadly night shade. Eventually the tomato was eaten and has since become on of the most popular vegetables world wide.

Tomatoes grow best in fertile, well drained soil with a pH of 6.5 to 7.5, warm but not extremely hot weather, regular watering and at least 6-8 hours of sunlight each day. Even though we, as gardeners, do our best problems can still arise. There are several problems common to tomatoes. which can be caused by lack of proper fertilization, improper watering techniques, extreme hot weather and soil born viruses. Learn how to identify and treat these common problems.



### **BLOSSOM END ROT**

**Cause:** Irregular watering or drought \* Calcium deficiency High Nitrogen fertilization \* Root pruning during cultivation

**Solution:** Water at regular intervals  
\* Apply Bone Meal at planting time \* Add Lime to soil in Fall \* Adjust pH to between 6.5 and 7.5

### **SUN SCALD**

**Cause:** Lack of foliage due to pruning or disease

**Solution:** Prune cautiously if at all  
\* Provide shade covering during excessive heat





## CRACKING

**Cause:** Dry weather followed by excessive watering causes fruits to expand quicker than the tomato skin can grow

**Solution:** Water regularly and deeply \* Mulch \* Plant resistant varieties



## LEAF ROLL

**Cause:** Hot, dry weather \* Lack of water \* Excessive Pruning \* Dry winds \* Cultivar susceptibility

**Solution:** Prune cautiously \* Water at regular intervals \* Provide shade during excessive heat \* Plant varieties less prone to leaf roll



## FOLIAGE BUT NO TOMATOES

**Cause:** Too much nitrogen \* Alkaline soil

**Solution:** Reduce nitrogen fertilizer \* Bring soil pH to between 6.5 and 7.5

## BLOSSOM DROP

**Cause:** Excessively hot, dry weather \* Too much nitrogen \* Dry winds \* Heavy rain

**Solution:** Not all blossoms will drop \* As temperatures decrease blossoms stop dropping





## WATER STRESS

**Over watering**—Plants develop yellowing leaves

**Under watering**—Wilted leaves that are still green

**Both Over and Under Watering**— Wilt, stems weaken, leaves curl up and discol-



## EARLY BLIGHT

**Cause:** Fungal disease caused by *Alternaria solani* \* Spread by splashing rain, irrigation, insects and garden tools

**Solution:** Water from the bottom to keep water from splashing on plants \* Mulch around plants \* Improve air circulation \* Remove all garden debris after harvest \* Crop Rotation



## LATE BLIGHT

**Cause:** Stress or aging plants \* Brown angular lesions appear on oldest foliage

**Solution:** Water regularly \* No overhead watering Remove debris after harvest \*