

CCG Fall Tomato Garden



August 2015

Grow Tomatoes that Thrive in the Southeast

The fall tomato season begins in September and runs until Thanksgiving. If the warm weather holds, we could have tomatoes for our winter holidays, too. The shorter days of fall means we have 60 to 75 days to grow small to medium size tomatoes. Provide your seedlings with rich, well-amended soil and fertilize on a regular basis. Keep an eye out for whiteflies, too, and you will be rewarded with healthy plants and flavorful tomatoes.

For the Love of Tomatoes

If you love tomatoes, I highly recommend Craig Le Houllier's book *Epic Tomatoes*. After reading this marvelous book, I discovered two seed suppliers that specialize in tomato seeds: **TomatoFest** (tomatofest.com) and **Southern Exposure Seed Exchange** (southernexposure.com).

These folks are dedicated to helping gardeners succeed in growing tomatoes according to region and climate. A few varieties are available locally, too. Check *Farm & Garden*, *Lowe's* and *Home Depot* for seedlings.

Keep Tomatoes Happy & Healthy

I have found that tomatoes are easy to grow if you give them what they need. I add cow manure, mushroom compost, and bone meal to my garden soil. Lots of it. I space the seedlings 3 feet apart and use a double *Ultomato Plant Cage* for each plant. I check my plants often for bugs and diseases, too. I use a fungicide, insecticidal soap, Neem oil and *Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew*, as needed. I water the roots, not the leaves, and my garden is tidy. It all helps.

One of the most valuable take-aways from *Epic Tomatoes* is that tomatoes require a fertilizer high in phosphorus. I now use a fertilizer with a 1:4:2 ratio. *Fox Farm's Tiger Bloom* has this ratio.

A Rainbow of Flavor

These tomatoes have early to mid-season harvest dates, and are varieties that do well in the Southeast. Many are heirlooms. Some are hybrids. I am confident they are all delicious.

Black: Black Plum, Chocolate Stripes, Eva Purple Ball, Japanese Black Trifelle, Rosella Purple.

Orange & Pink: Amy's Apricot, Dad's Sunset, Garden Peach, Ozark Pink, Mini Orange, Sugar Cherry.

Red: Abe Lincoln Improved, Amy's Sugar Gem, Atkinson, Bush Beefsteak, Druzba, German Johnson, Glacier, Heinz, Illini Star, Kewalo, Marglobe Improved, Matt's Wild Cherry, Mountain Princess, OTV Brandywine, Peron Sprayless, Neptune, Red Cherry, Red Currant, Red Pisa Date, Roma VF, Rutgers Improved, Stupice, West Virginia 63.

Yellow & Green: Beam's Yellow Pear, Cherokee Green, Dr. Carolyn, Green Grape, Gold Nugget, Hawaiian Currant, Illini Gold, Yellow Bell, Yellow Pear.

Disease-Resistant: Atkinson, Druzba, Eva Purple Ball, Marglobe VF, Matt's Wild Cherry, Neptune, Ozark Pink VF, Roma VF, West Virginia 63.