

GROW IT

CHERRY TOMATOES

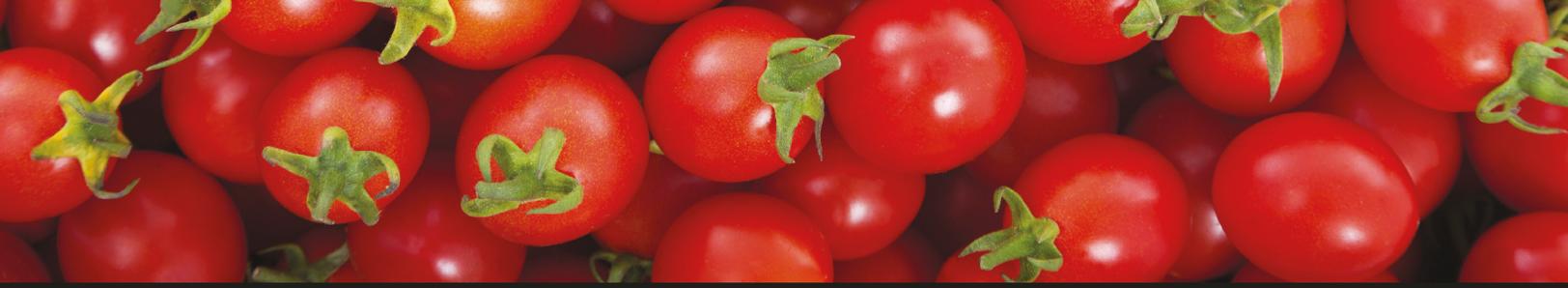
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Get It

- 🔥 Tomatoes can be planted as seeds or purchased as plants and transplanted into your home garden.
- 🔥 Transplants are often best for gardeners because they can harvest tasty tomatoes faster (only 45-70 days). It will take more time and management to grow and harvest tomatoes from seed.
- 🔥 When purchasing transplants, look for stocky plants with a healthy green color. Avoid plants with thin stems or yellowed leaves. Locally grown transplants are the best choice for planting in Tennessee.
- 🔥 Cherry tomatoes that are labeled indeterminate will be much taller and are better for larger garden spaces where you can support them with cages or stakes, while tomatoes labeled determinate or dwarf are best for small spaces or containers.

Plant It

- * Do not plant tomatoes until the soil has warmed up and the last frost of the season has passed, which is typically late April or early May in Tennessee.
- * Tomatoes will need approximately six to eight hours of direct sunlight per day. Shaded tomatoes will return a disappointing harvest.
- * Tomatoes are best grown in soil that drains well and is at least 6-8 inches deep.
- * Plant in a spot with loose, workable soil that is free from weeds. Space plants about 24-36 inches apart within a row with 4-5 feet between rows.
- * If an in-ground site is not available, raised beds or container gardens can be used. Select more compact varieties (there are many great options) for these sites. Container cherry tomatoes can be grown in pots that hold 5 gallons or more of potting mix. Larger containers can provide a more consistent moisture level.



- ★ Adding granular fertilizer at planting will provide nutrients for the growing plant. A 4-foot-by-8-foot raised bed could be fertilized with $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup of 10-10-10 fertilizer. Evenly mix the fertilizer into the top 2 inches of soil or growing mix.
- ★ Water tomatoes approximately twice per week depending on rainfall. Tomatoes should receive about 1-2 inches of water per week. Split up watering during the week so that soil remains moist to prevent wilting of tomato plants. Mulching will help retain moisture.
- ★ You should add 2-3 tablespoons of water soluble fertilizer labeled for fruiting crops in 2-4 gallons of water weekly in a 4-foot-by-8-foot raised bed to keep the plants growing and producing well.
- ★ Cages are a great way to support larger cherry tomatoes. Choose wire cages about 5 feet tall, and make sure there is enough room for plants to grow wider.



- ◆ Tomatoes are typically ready to pick about 45-70 days from the time of transplant, but cherry tomatoes can be quicker than larger fruit.
- ◆ For best results, allow tomatoes to ripen on the vine and pick when red, but before they become soft or show any cracking. Cracking can happen fast if there has been lots of moisture.



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