

GARDEN IN A BUCKET

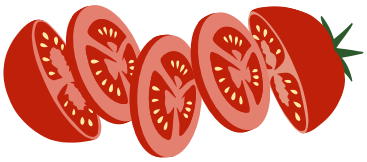
CHERRY TOMATOES

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR TOMATO PLANT

Place in an area that gets sun at least 6-8 hours a day. Water thoroughly but not too often. Allow the soil to dry out slightly between waterings. Use a balanced fertilizer specifically formulated for tomatoes, following the package directions. Fertilize regularly, especially during the fruiting season.

Why grow a garden?

Growing a garden offers many health benefits, both physical and mental. When you garden, you get regular exercise through digging, planting, and weeding, which helps keep your body active and strong. Being outside in the fresh air and sunlight also boosts your mood and increases your vitamin D levels, which is good for your bones and immune system. Gardening can reduce stress and anxiety, giving you a sense of calm and accomplishment. Plus, when you grow your own fruits and vegetables, you're more likely to eat healthy, fresh foods that are packed with nutrients your body needs. It's a fun and rewarding way to take care of your health!





You should plant tomatoes outdoors from mid May to early June, after the last frost and soil temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees.

- **Planting Method:** Dig a hole in the middle of your bucket deep enough to plant up to the first row of leaves.. Test and dig more if needed. Remove plant from the plastic container and place in the hole. Mound dirt around the plant covering the first row of leaves. This gives it a deep root base to start. Pack the soil lightly around your plant.
- As your plant develops you will need to stake the plant. See picture to the left. You will need a stake long enough to support the plant and keep it from sagging.
- Pollination tips are on back in the Helpful hints.
- **Harvest Time:** Days to harvest range from 55 to 70 days.

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Planting in a 5 gallon bucket

Preparing your bucket: Add drainage holes to the bottom of your bucket with a drill. In a 5 gallon bucket drill 6-8 holes that are at least ¼ inch in diameter. You can add 3 inches of loose rock (river rock) to the bottom of your bucket to also help with drainage. Add your soil 2 to 3 inches from the top of the bucket. Pack lightly as you go. Make sure to not tightly pack the soil. This gives the roots room to grow. Lightly water to moisten the soil.

Where to place your plant: You can grow it indoors or out. If you put it indoors you will need a tray to place under your bucket to hold the water drained. Place your plant in an area that will receive at least 6-8 hours of sunlight a day. Protect your plant from windy areas or areas that will receive too much sun. If you place your bucket on cement, place something under it so it is not directly on the cement.

Watering: It is important not to over water your plant. Water the base of the plant and not the plant itself. This prevents fungus. If the leaves look wilted and curled you are not watering enough. If you notice mold around the base of your plant you are watering too much. The soil should be slightly damp. Water enough so water begins to come out the bottom but is not running out. Youtube has some great videos for self watering. Water in the morning hours. This helps the plant dry in the sun all day and prevents fungus and mold on your plant.

Helpful tips:

- You will notice that your plant will look wilted for a few days after planting in the bucket. This is completely normal as your plant takes root. Don't panic.
- Staking the plants or giving them support is most helpful in container planting. Nothing fancy is needed just string and a stick that is long enough and thick enough to offer the plant support. Place it near the main stem of the plant. You may need help holding and tying in place.
- To pollinate in a container just gently shake your plant. You will need to do this, especially if you plant indoors. Watch for flowers and shake. This will help your plant produce fruit.
- If deer or yard pests are an issue in your area, consider protecting your bucket with fine mesh fencing or purchase pest granules to sprinkle on your bucket from your local Farm/Ranch store.
- If hail is predicted, move to a protected location or gently cover until the threat passes.



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