



# TOMATOES

## BASIC CARE

### SUN

At least 6-8 hours a day

### WATER

- Pour water directly into the soil at the base of the plant, not on the leaves or fruits.
- Keep soil consistently moist but not overly wet.
  - > To test: push finger one inch deep into soil, if dry, add water.
- In summer, plants will need almost daily watering.

### STAKING/CAGING

As your tomato plant grows, loosely secure it to a stake or stick to help the plant grow vertically and support the weight of its fruit. This can also be done with a tomato cage.

### HARVESTING

- To safely remove a tomato from the vine, hold the plant just above the fruit and use your other hand to gently pull the tomato. You can twist the stem a little to encourage it to break, if needed.
- Many gardeners prefer to harvest when the tomato is mostly red, but you may need to harvest earlier if pests are a problem.
- Tomatoes can ripen off the vine, so you can harvest them when they are a size you like and allow them to ripen indoors.
- Wash tomatoes thoroughly with water before eating.

### STORING

- Tomatoes that need to ripen can be stored on the counter.
- Tomatoes that are perfectly ripe should be eaten immediately!
- If they can't be eaten immediately, store them in the fridge to prevent continued ripening (and rotting!)

## COMMON PROBLEMS

### INSECT PESTS

- Insects: remove by hand, or try insecticidal soap (check out the UGA Extension website for more details).
- Squirrels: Consider getting a net/covering for the tomatoes to keep them away.
- Rots: tomatoes are affected by several pathogens in the soil. To prevent the spread of these pathogens, don't plant tomatoes in the same container twice without changing out the soil.

### TOMATO IS NO LONGER PRODUCING

Tomatoes are annuals that will not produce again once they stop. Remove the tomato plant from the bucket. The soil should be good for planting again the following year, but it would be best to plant something different (preferably not in the tomato family).