

June Produce Spotlight: Tomatoes



Photo by Amanda Wilkins

Planting window

Harvest window



Recommended Tomato Varieties for North Carolina

Bush Type: 'Bush Celebrity', 'Better Bush', 'Bush Early Girl'
Hybrid: 'Better Boy', 'Celebrity', 'Early Girl', 'Big Beef'

Heirloom: 'Cherokee Purple', 'German Johnson', 'Homestead'
Cherry: 'Juliet', 'Super Sweet 100'



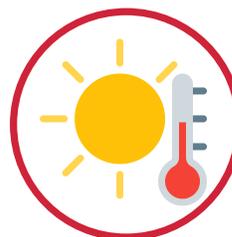
Top Growing Tips

1. You can plant as soon as the last threat of frost has passed, but you can also plant throughout the summer to extend your tomato harvest into the fall.
2. Stake or cage at planting
3. Water deeply, but infrequently
4. Don't put fertilizer directly in the hole with your new plant! Put the fertilizer on top of the soil or dissolve in water and apply.



75-135
DAYS TO
HARVEST

Warm or Cool Season Crop?



Warm



Cool

Does this plant grow well in a container?



Yes!



Fair



Not Well



General Care

Light: Plant in location with between 4-8 hours of sunlight each day.

Soil: Plant in well-draining soil. Add compost to improve soil structure and nutrient holding capacity. Use a soil test to determine what amendments are needed for growing tomatoes.

Spacing: Space plants 24-36" apart. Use raised beds or containers that are at least 12 inches deep.



Common Diseases & Pests

Pests: Aphids, flea beetles, leafminers, spider mites, stink bugs, fruitworms, whiteflies, tobacco budworm, hornworm, cutworms

Diseases: septoria leaf spot, bacterial spot, late blight, gray leaf spo, early blight, bacterial wilt, verticillium wilt, southern blight, fusarium wilt

Management

Plant healthy, strong plants; Choose disease resistant varieties; Alternate planting locations of tomatoes and related vegetables in the nightshade family at least every 3-4 years to avoid buildup of nematodes and diseases in the soil.

June Pollinator Pairings: Bumble Bees



Photo by Amanda Wilkins

Active Season



What do I look like?

Bumble bees are in the genus *Bombus* in the insect family Apidae. There are 15 species native to North Carolina. They are known for their fuzzy bums (abdomen) and pollen-collecting hairs on hind legs.



Where do I live?

They nest in colonies and can build their colonies under the ground in rodent burrows and above ground in birdhouses, in wall voids, old mouse nests, or under grass tussocks.

The colony dies out at the end of the season, so only the mated queens to overwinter



What are my favorite flowers?

Flowers that are wide and it is easy for the bees to land on. Plants in the sunflower family (Asteraceae), carrot family (Apiaceae), and mint family (Lamiaceae) are favorites.



How can you help me?

You can plant more flowering plants, and different types of plants that flower throughout the year. You can leave abandoned rodent nests or burrows beneath old tree stumps for queens to nest. Reduce tilling and soil disturbance in areas you don't need to! Don't spray insecticides when bees are active and make sure they do not have residual effects.



How do I pair with the produce in the spotlight?

I use buzz pollination that is important for tomatoes to drop or release their pollen. I carry the pollen from one flower to the next, which helps new tomatoes form! The more I work, the more tomatoes you get!

How well does this pollinator pollinate other fruit and vegetable crops?



Well



Fair