10 MORE TIPS for SUCCESS

GROWING TOMATOES IN CONTAINERS

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SCOTT'S TIPS
FOR GROWING TOMATOES IN CONTAINERS

1. Let's start with this: Don't apologize! Growing tomatoes in containers is a great idea. Perfect drainage, an earlier harvest, mobility and efficient use of space are all good reasons to use containers every season.

2. Use large pots. A tomato plant will not thrive and fruit successfully in a tiny container. 15” x 15” is minimal. A wine barrel or large pulp pot? Excellent, especially since those materials won't heat up excessively.

3. Fill the container with a premium potting soil, planting mix or a combination of the two. Add worm castings? Compost? Yes and yes. Rich soil is key to your success.

4. Container varieties are bred to be short and stocky so they will be perfect in your pot. Smaller-fruiting and short season tomatoes will generally be more reliable. Plant the big ones in the ground if you have the space.

5. How many plants in a container? One. That’s right, one. Plant it deep so some of the stem is buried. Yes, it may look a bit silly but not for long.

6. Set your pots in a place that will get 6-8 hours of sun a day. Move them at will as the season progresses to ensure the proper amount of direct sunlight.

7. Add stakes or a cage as the plant grows, just like you do in your garden. Or set your pot near a fence that can support the plant. Just hold it up!

8. Water regularly and be sure to soak the root ball. In the hottest part of the season you may be watering every day. Your pot drains much more efficiently than your garden soil, which is an asset.

9. Fertilize every 10-14 days. Because of more frequent watering, the fertilizer you apply will be washed out quickly. Stay on top of this. Foliar feeding (applying liquid food to the leaves) is a great idea as the season progresses.

10. Mulch the top of the soil to protect the roots. Or, wrap the entire container in burlap or canvas to help keep container temps consistent. Overheated pots just fry roots all summer!

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Scott Daigre, owner and producer, is also the author of Tomatomania!: Your Guide to Perfect Home Grown Tomatoes.

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