

# Ten Tips for a Successful Tomato Container Garden

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Not enough time or space for a garden? Tomatoes grow great in containers. Here are a few tips ...

1. Choose a compact, bush, or dwarf tomato variety. These tomatoes are often labeled at garden centers as “great for a container gardening”.
2. Buy healthy, resistant varieties. Choose varieties that are resistant to diseases prevalent to where you live. Look for this information on the plant tag or garden catalog.
3. Choose a container large enough to provide support for your tomato.
4. Don't rush to plant your tomato. Plant near the recommended planting date for your area. Even if you can protect the plants from frost and/or cold night air, cool temperatures can keep growth slow, cause nutrient deficiencies, and prevent fruit set. In addition, once fruits start to form, cold temperatures can cause the tomatoes to become deformed.
5. Place the container in an area that has at least 4 hours of direct sunlight each day.
6. Water your tomato plant whenever the top 2 to 3 inches of soil is dry. This may be every day or every other day if the weather is hot and dry.
7. When you water, water until it drains through the bottom of the pot and don't let the plant sit in excess water.
8. Fertilize once a month throughout the growing season with a fertilizer labeled for vegetable plants.
9. If the tomato gets too large or bushy, support it with a small cage or stake and/or prune out some branches.
10. Monitor for disease and insect problems. If a disease occurs, remove and destroy infected leaves or the entire plant if the disease is severe.

