

Health Benefits!

- * Tomatoes are one of the low-calorie vegetables. They are also very low in any fat contents and have zero cholesterol levels. They are excellent sources of antioxidants, dietary fiber, minerals, and vitamins.
- * The vegetable contains very good levels of vitamin A, and flavonoid antioxidants.
- * Additionally, they are also good source of antioxidant vitamin-C; consumption of foods rich in vitamin C helps the body develop resistance against infectious agents and scavenge harmful free radicals.
- * Fresh tomato is very rich in potassium. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps controlling heart rate and blood pressure caused by sodium.
- * Tomatoes contain lycopene, which has been shown to improve the skin's ability to protect against harmful UV rays.



The *Foundation* has developed tools and resources to “sow the seeds of understanding”. Our programs are available throughout New York State. We invite all who utilize agriculture in the form of food, shelter and clothing to invest in our programs and help us as we work to accomplish our mission. Our thanks to the NYFB Pro-Ed Committee for their help.

Tomato Categories

These descriptions may apply to heirloom varieties, hybrids, organic, etc.

Beefsteak, Slicing or **globe** tomatoes are medium to large in size and usually used for processing and fresh eating.

Plum tomatoes, or paste tomatoes, are bred with a higher solids content for use in tomato sauce and paste, and are usually oblong.

Pear tomatoes are pear-shaped, and produce a richer gourmet paste.

Cherry tomatoes are small and round and often sweet, generally eaten whole in salads.

Grape tomatoes, are smaller and oblong, a variation on plum tomatoes, and used in salads.



Tomato Classifications:

Determinate, or bush, types bear a full crop all at once; they are a good choice for container growing and preferred by growers who wish to harvest at one time.

Indeterminate varieties develop into vines that never top off and continue producing until killed by frost. They are preferred by those who want ripe fruit throughout the season.

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Sowing the Seeds of Understanding

The Foundation

New York Farm Bureau
Foundation for Agricultural Education, Inc.

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Tomatoes



The Mission of the Foundation is to inform and educate all New Yorkers regarding agriculture and to increase understanding between the farm and non-farm public.



Do You Know?

Tomato Info!

The rich, sweet, complex taste of freshly picked tomatoes is unmistakable, and consumers turn to farmers' markets to find it.

Tomato flavor is a personal preference. Some prefer the soft texture more closely associated with the heirloom tomatoes, while others like a firm texture associated with the hybrid varieties. **Yellow** and **orange** tomatoes generally tend to have less acid and a milder flavor than red and pink tomatoes.

Buying plants: Choose sturdy, dark green plants that are not root-bound and do not have open flowers or fruit. Transplant after danger of frost is past. Abundant phosphorus and calcium fertilizer is needed for best yields and to prevent blossom end rot, and they also need soil moisture. There are many common tomato diseases; many varieties have resistance to one or more diseases.

Tomatoes grow well with seven hours of sunlight a day.

Storage – never store tomatoes in the refrigerator, the cold breaks down the tissue and destroys flavor. The best temperature for storing is 45°– 60°, for 7 to 10 days, depending on ripeness.



Ripening tomatoes on a window sill is not good for the tomatoes; the sunlight will destroy the Vitamin C in the tomatoes, and on a really hot day, may cook them!



Versatility

Is the Tomato a Fruit or Vegetable?

Botanically the tomato is a fruit horticulturally and LEGALLY it is a vegetable!

On February 4, 1887, the Supreme Court of the United States decided if tomatoes were a fruit or a vegetable. The Court decision stated that botanically tomatoes are considered a fruit of the vine (as are cucumbers, squash, beans and peas) ... In common language of people, the tomato is like other vegetables grown and served at dinner ... not like fruits generally considered as a dessert.

New York State Season of Availability

Early varieties in July, abundant quantities in August and Sept. Hydroponic greenhouse and high-tunnel tomatoes are delicious and available year-round. Continual development of new varieties has produced greenhouse varieties of excellent quality and flavor. They are also picked at a later stage of ripeness due to the shorter distance needed for transportation.



Tomato Varieties!

There are hundreds of tomato varieties grown for various purposes. Heirloom tomatoes are becoming increasingly popular, particularly among home gardeners, as they tend to produce more interesting and flavorful crops at the cost of disease resistance and productivity.

Hybrid plants remain common, since they usually are heavier producers, and sometimes combine unusual characteristics of heirloom tomatoes with the ruggedness of conventional commercial tomatoes.

While virtually all commercial tomato varieties are red, some cultivars – especially heirlooms – produce fruit in other colors, including green, yellow, orange, pink, black, brown, ivory, white, and purple. Less common variations include fruit with stripes, fuzzy skin on the fruit, and multiple colors.

There is also a difference between those varieties specifically for commercial and home-gardener cultivars, although most commercial varieties are readily available for the home gardener. The gardener variety are often bred more specifically for flavor, while commercial cultivars are also bred for additional factors like consistent size and shape, disease and pest resistance, suitability for mechanized picking and shipping, and ability to ripen after picking.

