

Tomato Seed Starting Cheat Sheet



GrowTomato.com

When to Start: (# of Weeks Before Last Frost Date)	6 to 8 weeks
Seed Germination Medium:	Seedling mix
Planting Depth:	¼ Inch (cover germination pots with domes, trays, or plastic wrap to maintain moisture; remove after germination and sprouting)
Ideal Temperature Range: (Air/Room Temperature)	75 to 85°F (24° C) 70 to 75°F for sprouted seedlings
Ideal Soil Temperature for Germination:	77°F (Range of 75 to 85°F) Seedling heat mats speed and support germination; remove from heat mat after germination to prevent leggy stems
Expected Time to Germination: (Sprouting)	7 to 10 days
Watering Frequency:	As needed; check daily; during germination, usually every 2 to 3 days. Increase for sprouted plants and potted up seedlings; may need to water daily or twice daily for larger transplants; <i>do not let soil dry completely out; water when top of soil is dry; bottom water just until soil darkens</i>
Supplemental lighting: (Grow lights)	Full spectrum light such as LED grow lights or 1 warm, 1 cool fluorescent light kept about 2 inches above the plant top for 12 to 16 hours per day
When to Pot Up Seedlings:	When seedlings form first set of true leaves
Potting Up Medium:	At 2 ½ to 3 inches tall
Pot Size for Potting Up:	Quality potting soil
Fertilize With:	2- to 3-inch pot; 4 or 6 cell packs are ideal
Fertilization Schedule for Seedlings:	Quality All-purpose water-soluble fertilizer for vegetables
Hardening Off Schedule: (Prepare Seedlings for Outdoor Transplant)	1 x per week; first week: 25% dilution; week 2: 50% dilution; week 3 until hardening: 100% dilution (dilute according to label instructions for seedlings)
When to Transplant Outside:	Gradually introduce outdoors over a period of about 10 days; start first for 2 hours in shade; next day, 2 filtered light; then, half day in sunlight; increase to full day of full light over next several days
Additional Growing Notes:	After the danger of frost has passed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plants benefit from the addition of a light fan blowing to circulate air • Brushing your hand over the top of the plants can help prevent legginess • Both actions help strengthen stems • Increased airflow decreases fungal diseases • Bottom watering methods help prevent damping off disease

