



Grow tomatoes in pots this summer

You can grow tomato plants in pots on your patio or balcony. You can plant them from mid- to late May. But watch out for frost.



Good plants for pots



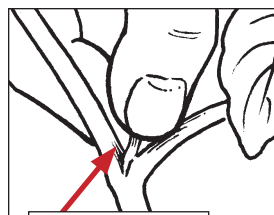
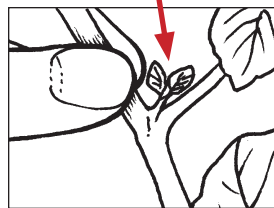
Here are two types of tomatoes to grow in pots. Grow one of each.

Cherry tomatoes

- Buy:** Sweet 100, Sweet Million or Sungold
- Height:** tall
(Use a tomato cage or stakes and string.)
- Size of tomatoes:** 2 cm (1 in.)
- Prune:** Pinch off or cut off some new shoots during the summer.



new shoot



pinch off

Bush tomatoes

- Buy:** Tumbler or Patio
- Height:** short and bushy
- Size of tomatoes:** 5 cm (2 in.)
- No pruning**
- No cage or stakes**



Photo: Hole's Greenhouses

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Adapted from Lois Hole's *Tomato Favorites* • Photos: isolated cherry tomatoes: iStockphoto; other unlabelled photos: Bev Burke • Art—new shoot, pinch off, pots with holes, potting soil: Nola Johnston; tomato plants, thermometer, frost damage: Guy Parsons; stakes, string, tomato cage, fertilizer: Corinna Ruhl; sun, water: iStockphoto

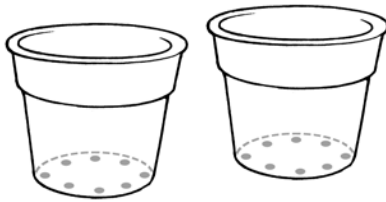
This article first appeared in the May—June 2006 issue of *English Express*.

You will need

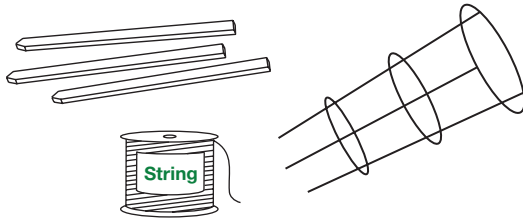
- 1 cherry tomato plant
- 1 Tumbler or Patio tomato plant



- 2 large pots
—30 cm (12 in.) across



- 1 tomato cage
or stakes and string
—for cherry tomato plant



potting soil



Note: Use a **light** soil mix in your pots. The bag might say soilless potting mix or potting soil. Do not use garden soil.

Before you plant

Your tomato plants were growing in a greenhouse before you bought them.

How to you prepare them to live outside? You harden them off for 7 to 10 days.

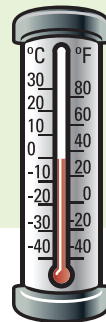
Then you plant them outside in big pots.

How to harden off plants

☞ During the day, put the tomato plants outside in a partly sunny spot.



☞ If it might freeze at night, cover your plants. Or you can bring them inside. Frost will damage the plants.



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How to plant

1 Put potting soil into the pot.



2 Make a hole in the soil.



Leave 5 cm (2 in.) of space here.

3 Take the tomato plant out of its container.



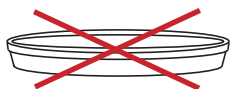
4 Pinch off small, lower leaves.

5 Put the plant in the hole. Press the soil down firmly.



Note: If the plant is tall and thin, plant it deeper in the hole.

6 Water well. Don't put saucers under your pots.



After you plant

Tomato plants like sun

Put your plants in the sun. Tomatoes grow best in a hot, sunny place away from the wind.



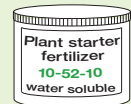
Water every day

Water your tomato plants every day during the summer. On hot days, water twice a day. Water the soil, not the leaves.



Fertilize

Fertilize your tomato plants once a week. Use fertilizer that you mix with water. Look for numbers on the labels.



☞ Use 10-52-10 for the first three weeks.

☞ Use 20-20-20 or 15-15-30 after that.



Frost kills

Protect your plants from frost. Cover them with old towels, sheets, blankets or cardboard boxes.

