

ANOTHER
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FACT SHEET

SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS

GOURMET VEGETABLES

4th of July TOMATO

(*Solanum lycopersicum* '4th of July')



DESCRIPTION

Known as a very juicy pixie tomato with that real tomato taste, the title of this variety of tomato gives away its origins as American. This is the earliest variety of non-cherry type tomatoes which, according to American gardening folklore, "in a typical climate, should be ripe by the fourth of July". The plant produces luscious 3-4oz/10g tomatoes that are bright red and usually ripe 49 days after germination or planting in the ground. The harvest is plentiful and of medium to small size but there are always lots of them. While this is one of the earliest sprouting varieties, it will continue to produce tomatoes until late summer to early Autumn/Fall and in some ideal weather conditions they will even produce up until the first frosts.



USES

There are very few meals in which a tomato can not be added to. This tomato suits all dishes - sandwiches, salads, soups, casseroles, sauces, stews and many others - certain to add colour and flavor.



GROWTH

As an indeterminate variety, Fourth of July requires staking and should be pruned to a few leaders,

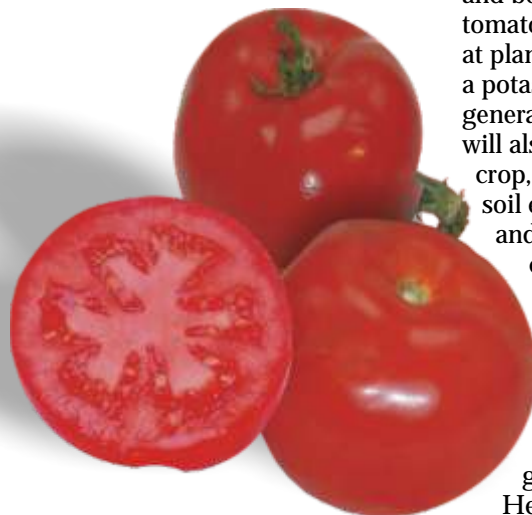
depending on plant vigor, and then have its laterals removed. You don't need to prune foliage, it protects the stem and the fruit from burning or overheating. You need to shape the staking varieties to one or two leaders and prune the laterals. Minimal leaf removal for sunlight penetration is required in outdoor crops. Companion plant tomato with basil - the basil will improve growth and flavour and attract bees and ladybirds and deters some pests. Parsley, asparagus, celery, chives, onions and cucumber will improve also tomato growth and flavour and marigold and nasturtium will deter nematodes and insect pests. Do not plant in close proximity to corn or potato. Vine ripened fruit is undoubtedly excellent, but tomatoes can also be ripened successfully by picking fruit when it is just pink in color. While an old wives tale suggests it is best to leave them in a window sill, they will

actually ripen to a better flavor away from direct sunlight.



CULTIVATION

Tomatoes do best in hot climates, with extra water in spring while the plant is growing and drier sunny conditions while the fruits are ripening. Tomatoes do best to have a full eight hours of sunlight. Grow in rich, moist soil climates. Plants may be grown in a green house but usually the flavor is better when grown outside, provided that they ripen properly on the vine before harvesting. The advantages of green house cultivation are earlier and heavier crops, a longer period of fruit production in autumn/fall and a wider choice of suitable varieties. Soil preparation is the key to successful tomato growing. Soils that are suitable for tomatoes need to be fertile, well drained and moisture retentive. Blood and bone is an ideal fertiliser for tomatoes and can be used safely at planting time, but you will need a potassium source too. A good general purpose organic fertiliser will also do the job. After your first crop, grow tomatoes in the same soil each year with the old stems and leaves dug into the soil for compost. Tomatoes can suffer from a few problems, such as Wilt, Virus, moulds and Red Spider. However For more information on keeping your vegetables healthy see our organic gardening fact sheet on the Herbert website.



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