

HYANNIS COUNTRY GARDEN

All About Tomato Varieties

In order to help our customers choose the perfect plant for their gardens we've prepared this information and definition sheet.

Indeterminate: Indeterminate tomatoes grow continuously. Additionally, they continue to produce fruit until they are killed by cold weather. Indeterminate tomatoes are often called "vine" tomatoes because of their long tentacle-like vines. Indeterminate tomatoes must be staked or caged so that their stems are lifted off the ground. They may grow over five feet tall.

Determinate: Determinate tomato plants grow to a given size and then stop. Typically, further plant growth ends when fruit begins to grow on the terminal bud of the plant. The plant grows to a genetically "determined" length and then stops. These tomatoes are often called "bush tomatoes" due to their compact size. Typically determinate varieties do not exceed 4 feet in height and need shorter staking. Many people choose this type of tomato for containers.

Heirlooms: An heirloom tomato is generally considered to be a variety that has been passed down through several generations of a family because of its valued characteristics. Many of these are open-pollinated varieties that have been available for more than 50 years. Most heirlooms are known for good taste but not for disease resistance.

Hybrids: Hybrid tomatoes come from the seeds produced by plants that were crossed with other varieties to achieve certain qualities. Hybrids are known to be bred mainly for production, disease resistance, and other qualities. Many new hybrids have been bred and selected for exceptional flavor as well as performance.

If you have the space it can be interesting to try several types of tomato plants and find the varieties that do best for you. If you only have room for one or two plants you might want to choose an indeterminate hybrid for in-ground plants and a determinate hybrid for containers. Examples would be: Rutgers, Big Boy, Better Boy or Supersonic for in-ground and Patio or Celebrity for pots.



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