**Getting the best from your SunSugar tomato plants.**

This cherry-sized tomato that is fully ripe when orange (it never turns red) regularly gets the best reviews for taste of any tomato, including from our own family! Our family rates them as follows:

1. SunSugar
2. RoseGold (Sweet Tree Farm custom hybrid)
3. Snow White
4. Matt’s Wild Cherry (often regarded as tops for taste and is considered the tomato that is most closely related to the original tomato that was domesticated about 2,500 years ago)

Tomatoes need full sun. Plant them in the sunniest place in the garden or in a container on a patio. Sun makes sugar, sugar makes sweet. No sun = no sugar. They do not like soggy soil.

Plant your young tomato plant by digging a hole that is twice as wide and the same depth as the pot. Fill the hole with water. In the fruit-tree world the old timers say, “plant a $5 tree in a $10 hole”. Same for tomatoes.

Before planting the plant, squeeze the pot a few times to loosen the soil so it no longer sticks to the pot. Spread your fingers and slot the stem of the tomato plant between your two longest fingers with the palm of your hand resting on the soil. Turn the pot over and tap on the base of the pot until the plant comes out. Put the tomato plant in the hole. The soil in the pot should be level with the soil in the garden. You do not need to add fertilizer. Mulching is very good for the plants (it adds nutrients, retains moisture, and reduces competition from weeds – pretty much a minor miracle). The best mulch is wood chips. Ideally the wood chips should be aged at least a year because when they are fresh, they tend to draw nitrogen out of the soil and your tomato needs that nitrogen. However, even fresh wood chips are better than none. Straw works well and even cardboard does the job. Water only if the soil surface dries out and turns light brown rather than the dark brown of moist soil. Plant them 18-24” apart. These plants get big (3’ across and 6’ tall) so stake them or use a cage to get maximum fruit. We use cages for all our tomato plants.

Recycle the pot by returning it to Sweet Tree Farm (they will be used next year, there is a drop off bin right where you bought the plants).

Tomatoes are self-fertile and do not need another plant for pollination, though two plants will get you twice as many compliments on the tomatoes!

Tomatoes are relatively free of pests and diseases. In our garden we put deer netting around the plants to keep deer and ground hogs out, but many people do nothing to defend their plants and still get lots of tomatoes.

Harvest from the last week of June through to the first frost (usually around the middle of October). The flavor is best in July and August and deteriorates as the nights get colder. We stop harvesting ours at about the end of September even though they produce for another couple of weeks.

Fully-ripe fruit is orange, they never get red. Yes, tomatoes are fruit! The tomato is the seed-containing swollen ovary of the plant, just like an apple. This is the color of fully ripe fruit:

****

When fully ripe, the fruit will come off in your fingers with almost no pull. The fruit grow in bunches and the fruit nearest the stem ripens first. Over the season, each plant will produce 1-2 ripe tomatoes each day, so harvest a handful maybe twice per week per plant. In midsummer you can get 2-3 times this. To feed the appetite our family of five has for these tomatoes (one family member ate 3lbs or about 150 tomatoes, an entire week’s crop, in a single afternoon – that’s how yummy they are!) I need to dedicate at least 30 plants to fresh fruit production (others are used to grow tomatoes to make tomato paste which is also excellent when made from SunSugar tomatoes – email me if you want the recipe). In all we grow about 60 plants per year.

On our farm, the average season-long harvest is 1-2 tomatoes per plant per day. There are about 3 tomatoes per ounce and about 50 tomatoes per pound, which is a bit more than a dry pint.

You can pay for your plants ($5 each) by sending payment via:

* Zelle to David Green – SweetTree Farm 617 872 3559
* Venmo to davidlcgreen@gmail.com
* By credit card using tap, dip or swipe at the farm stand
* By credit card by (boring!) entering your card number etc on my website here:
* <https://greenzerocarbonhome.com/shop/> or by scanning this QR code:
* 
* Good, old-fashioned greenbacks

If you have any questions, or of you want to reserve plants for next year, you can email David Green at davidlcgreen@gmail.com