



TOMATO TOWER & BOX



Materials

- 1 2" x 12" 8'
- 1 2" x 2" 8'
- 1 Rigid tie for 2x2
- 3" Deck Screws
- 2 5" x 1/4" bolts with washers and nuts

Directions

1. Cut the 2x12 into 4, 16" pieces. Screw together using the 3" deck screws, to make a box measuring 17 1/2" square.
2. Cut one 2x2 into a 6' piece. Attach this to one side of the box, creating a center post 6' high from the ground to top of post. Nail the rigid tie to the top of the post. Attach the remaining 2' piece of the 2x2 to the rigid tie, with a 3" piece extending off the back side.
3. Cut the other 2x2 into 2 pieces that are 22" long, angled at 45 degrees. These will be bolted to the post and top rail to form a support. Drill a 1/4" hole through the supports, the post and the top rail. Assemble using the 5" bolts.
4. Paint or stain as desired.

Skill Level: Beginner

Cost: approximately \$25, check with your local store for rigid tie availability

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For similar information, go on-line to www.pierce.wsu.edu/mg/

Tips for Growing Tomatoes

Choosing Transplants

- Look for short, sturdy plants, not tall and leggy ones.
- The Northwest growing season is short; choose tomatoes with a “days to maturity” of 75-85 days or less.
- Determinate Tomatoes: growth stops when flowering begins. All tomatoes are produced within 4-6 weeks. Good if you want to can or freeze them.
- Indeterminate Tomatoes: grow taller, flower and fruit as long as weather and lack of disease allow. Good for fresh tomatoes all season.

Harden Off:

A week before planting outside, take the tomato starts outside during the day and bring them inside at night. This allows the plants to become accustomed to cooler conditions, wind, and starts strengthening the stem.

Location

Choose the warmest site in an area that receives the most sun, a minimum of 6 hours a day. Next to a south-facing wall or building is a good choice.

When to Plant

The age to transplant is 7 weeks from seeding. The ideal soil temperature is 60 to 65 degrees, if colder you may need to provide some mulch to help warm up the soil.

Pinch off Blossoms and Fruit

It is important for tomatoes to establish roots early -- the better the roots, the more tomatoes! Blossoms or small fruit will take energy away from the developing root system.

How to Plant

Plant approximately 6-7” deep. Work some 5-10-10 fertilizer into the soil. Remove the lower leaves and bury as much of the stem as possible, up to 2” to 3” below the top leaves.

Fertilizer

Apply liquid fertilizer or side dress with granular fertilizer again on the first of June and the first of July. (“Side dress” means placing fertilizer around the plants at the drip line and covering with one to two inches of soil.) Be careful not to apply too much nitrogen, which will inhibit fruiting.

Watering

Tomatoes need about one inch of water a week and it should never be colder than 60 degrees. The tomatoes in your tower/box or containers may need more frequent watering. Never water from above because water on the stem and leaves promotes fungal diseases. Over-watering is one of the biggest mistakes with tomatoes. Too much water discourages fruiting and over-watered fruits often taste watery.