



Tomato Terminology

Beefsteak - a type of tomato rather than a variety; usually considered a large, irregular shaped tomato with solid flesh

Cherry - small, cherry-sized (or a little larger) fruit with plants ranging in size from dwarf to well over 6 feet tall

Container varieties – midget, patio, or dwarf tomato varieties with very compact vines and do best when grown in 5-gallon or larger containers, or in large hanging baskets; some produce fairly large fruit but the fruit are often of poorer quality than fruit from standard-sized plants; usually short-lived, producing their crop quickly over a short period

Crack resistant - a characteristic of a tomato variety that inherently resists breaks in its skin

Determinate – plants with a somewhat bushy appearance, grow to a given size, about 3 to 5 feet, bear most of their fruit within about 4 - 6 weeks, and then decline in vigor; most early-ripening and canning tomato varieties are of the determinate type

Disease resistance

A	Alternaria stem canker
F	Fusarium wilt
FF	Fusarium, races I and 2
FFF	Fusarium, races 1, 2, and 3
N	Nematodes
T	<i>Tobacco mosaic virus</i> (TMV)
St	Stemphylium gray leaf spot
V	Verticillium wilt

F1 hybrid - first generation seeds that come from plants with two specific parents

F2 hybrid - seeds that come from crossing two F1 hybrid parents

Globe - a round-shaped tomato

Grape - an elongated and more oval-shaped tomato, generally smaller than cherry tomatoes with firmer, thicker skin

Heirloom – open-pollinated variety having some considerable ancestry and history of use

Hybrid – man-made variety that is a cross between two distinctly different parents

Indeterminate - plants that continue to grow and set fruit all summer until they are killed by frost or disease; many typical standard-sized tomatoes for the home garden are indeterminate varieties

Maturity - the number of days from transplanting seedling to the first mature fruit

Open-pollinated - seeds produce plants and fruit that are identical to their parent; all heirloom varieties are open-pollinated but not all open-pollinated varieties are heirloom varieties

Pear – shaped like a pear, meaty with firm flesh, very few seeds and little gel; also known as plum, paste, Italian or Roma tomatoes

Plum - medium- to small-sized, oval or cylindrical in shape, thick-walled with fewer seed compartments; also called paste or Roma tomatoes

Slicing tomato - a term used to classify tomatoes based on the size and shape of the fruit, these are uniformly round; also called globe tomatoes

Standard-sized varieties - produce fruit ranging from a few ounces each to beefsteak types that may weigh as much as 2 pounds or more

Variety - a named “type” of a species having certain distinguishing characteristics - taste, shape, color, size, length of season, disease resistance, etc.



Prepared by Marin Master Gardeners, February, 2012

