

7/1/11

Tomatoes

# July Newsletter 2011 \* Tomatoes \*



## “The Swelling Fruit”

Inside this issue:

<i>Blossom End-Rot</i>	2
<i>Fruiting Troubles</i>	2
<i>Leaf Spots</i>	3
<i>Blossom Drop</i>	3
<i>Pics of Patty's Tomatoes</i>	3
<i>Info on Canning Salsa Workshop</i>	4
<i>Tomato/Vegetable Soup</i>	4

### Fun Facts

- Americans eat over 12 million tons of Tomatoes a year.
- 93% American gardening households grow tomatoes.
- Fresh-market tomatoes are grown in all 50 states.
- When the tomato was introduced to Europe in the 1500s, The French called it “the apple of love.” The Germans called it “the apple of paradise.”

I have had so many tomato questions this year, (actually I have tomato question every year) that I thought would write this newsletter exclusively on Tomatoes “The Swelling Fruit”. This name comes from the Nahuatl (Aztec) word *tomatl* which first appeared in print in 1595. Tomato plants are related to the nightshade family, which is very poisonous, the leaves and stems of tomato plants are poisonous, but of course the fruits are safe. Tomatoes are also related to peppers and potatoes. When people first came to South America about hundreds and hundreds of years ago, they ate tiny wild tomatoes which were very sour. We have most definitely come along way since then. Tomatoes are probably the most

loved “vegetable” grown by the veggie gardener. This is one reason there are so many questions. Tomatoes can have a lot of issues during the growing season. If not taken care of properly an entire season of growing could be lost.

There is nothing like a home grown tomato so I will give you tips on protecting this very precious crop. I will include one of my favorite recipes too.

*Patty*



*Patty's Heirloom Harvest 2010*

## Fruit or Vegetable?

So what to do think? I have always thought of the tomato as a vegetable when eating or cooking with them. Technically though, the tomato is definitely a fruit. True fruits develop and contain seeds within the fruit. So the tomato is the fruit of a tomato plant, but they are still considered a vegetable when cooking with them. In the late 1800's the tomato was clas-

sified as a fruit to avoid taxation, but this was changed after a Supreme Court ruling that the tomato is a vegetable and should be taxed accordingly.

Famous quote from that ruling:

*"Knowledge is to know that a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom is to know not to put one in a fruit salad."*

# Blossom—End Rot

Blossom End Rot can be caused by a couple of things. It can be caused by a calcium deficiency. When the roots are unable to take in sufficient water and calcium transported up to their fast developing fruits, the bottoms become rotted. Also inconsistent watering during bud set. Mulching the soil around them is very helpful in maintaining the right amount of moisture during drought stress. Use a calcium fertilizer for tomatoes and water



well during bud set. We carry these products to help with this. OMRI-Listed **Organicare Calplex** is a liquid supplement that corrects calcium deficiencies. Organicare Calplex also encourages increased resistance to stress do to weather or inconsistent

watering.

# Fruiting Troubles

Look for catfacing this year with all of our up & down temperatures.

**Catfacing** produces ugly, gnarled fruits with scars near the blossom end.

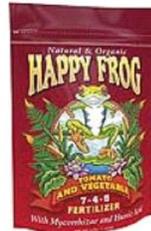
This is caused by cold or uneven temperatures during fruit development. It can also be viruses, fungi or insect damage. Planting to early is another reason this can happen. Remove bad looking fruit, tomatoes should recover when the weather stabilizes.



**Cracking** at the stems or shoulders is caused by inconsistent during fruit development. This also can happen after the tomatoes have gone through a dry spell then are watered to much to make up for the



Gardeners who give their plants **Happy Frog Tomato & Vegetable** (7-4-5) will be giving them the humic acid and my-



corrhizae they need to maximize nutrient uptake and boost yields. This mix also contains a balanced ratio of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to help achieve those goals, as well as calcium to neutralize acidic soil and build stronger cell walls.



**Tiger Bloom** is great for tomatoes. It produces intense color, blossoming and dense

cell tissue, Tiger Bloom is perfect for any plant at the time of flowering.



lack of watering. Some tomato varieties are more resistant to cracking than others. Watering more consistently and mulch will help this. The tomatoes are still edible, just cut out the bad parts and use the rest right away as they don't hold up as long.

**Anthracnose** This is a fungal disease. It looks like water-soaked spots with dark rings on the fruit. Throw away any infected fruit. Do not compost it. Rotate crops every year. Promote good air circulation around plants. Unfortu-

nately there are no organic controls that are effective. Anthracnose can reduce a bountiful harvest into rotted fruit in a few days in warm, moist weather.



# Leaf Spots

**Early Blight** This looks like dark spots surrounded by bull's-eye rings on the leaves. The fruits rot inside, starting at the stem. The blight can over winter in your soil, so clean up debris. Rotate crops , plant resistant varieties.



good air circulation and do not use overhead watering as this will spread the disease. A cool, wet growing season can be the cause. Late blight is not seed borne (however, it is tuber-borne in potato), so tomato plants started from seed locally should be free of the disease.



**Septoria leaf spot** This fungus starts on the lower leaves. It looks like little yellow dots that turn brown spots with halos around it. Remove infected leaves. Spores of the fungus are spread by splashing rain. The disease come on by moderate temperatures and extended periods of high relative humidity.



Powered by a naturally occurring microorganism that preys on disease-causing bacteria, **Serenade Garden Disease Control** treats plants afflicted with powdery mildew, rust, early & late blight, leaf spots and more.



**Late Blight** Dark spots on the leaves turn brown then papery. The entire plant can collapse all at once. Provide

# Blossom Drop

With the fluctuation in our weather this year many people have had this experience. Stress will cause all or some of the buds to fall off. This happens during

large temperature swings, drought. Mulching early with dried grass( not chemically treated) or straw can help control this.

### Phosphorus deficiency

Produces a purplish cast on the leaves. When the soil warms up, it goes away.

### Potassium deficiency

This causes the leaf margins to turn yellow and brown. Try fertilizer with kelp.

# Patty's Home Garden-Tomatoes 2011

Planted after Memorial Day



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Natural & Organic Garden Supply



Patty's Plants



*Patty's will be having a hands-on workshop on canning her homemade salsa the old-fashioned way. Participants will take part in chopping onions, tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers by hand, sterilizing containers, cooking, filling jars and sampling their work. Everyone will take home a small jar of salsa. There will be room for only 6 to 8 people so sign up is a must. 2 hour class, cost \$20.00. Date will depend on ripened tomatoes. More info to come.*



***Patty's 2010 Harvest of Heirloom Tomatoes***

**FIESTA ORGANICA FEST  
at Patty's Plants  
Sunday August 14th  
Come have fun Taste Testing  
Heirloom Tomatoes, Veggies,  
Dips, Patty Pan Squash  
Bread and more.**

**Details coming soon!**

## ***Garden Tomato Vegetable Soup*** Recipe by: Nick Bartel

3 ½ lbs tomatoes, peeled, cored & roughly chopped  
1 summer squash (patty pan or zucchini)  
2 sweet peppers  
2 carrots  
1/3 cup butter  
8 large sweet basil leaves  
2 T fresh chopped oregano  
1 T fresh fine chopped parsley  
1 medium onion, chopped  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 8 oz can tomato paste  
1 T each kosher salt,  
3 T sugar (opt)  
1 oz per serving heavy cream at serving time (opt)

Sautee onion and garlic in butter for 5 minutes, or until soft. Add tomatoes, broth, and spices. Fill pot with water after you've added all the vegetables. Bring to a boil, and simmer for about 30 to 40 min, or until tomatoes break down and are soft. Puree mixture. Reduce heat to low and cook mixture till reduced to taste this may take 3 to 4 hrs. but trust me, its worth it!

Add Cream & heat, but do not boil.

This is Delicious!