



HOW TO GROW TOMATOES

1 PLANT SELECTION

Choose hybrid or heirloom tomatoes that are disease resistant. Hybrids were developed to deal with disease problems. Disease and pest-resistant tomatoes are labeled with codes like V, F, N, T, and/or A.

2 MULCH

Always mulch around tomato plants to block soil-borne diseases and help retain moisture while reducing weeds.

3 SOIL & FERTILIZER

Test your soil to find if nutrients are needed. Tomatoes don't need much fertilizer. Add a couple of handfuls of organic fertilizer to each hole when planting tomatoes - that's all they need! Organic fertilizers break down slowly & last the entire growing season.

4 WATER

Do not overwater tomatoes! Check the soil before watering and do not get leaves wet. Use a soaker hose or water at the root. Overwatering is one of the most common sources of disease. Consider using a "tomato house" to shield plants from heavy rains.

5 CHECK PLANTS

Check your plants every other day. Caterpillars are the biggest pest problem for tomatoes, especially tomato hornworms. The big green caterpillars devour foliage and eat holes in the fruit. Remove caterpillars by hand as soon as you notice them.

6 HARVEST

Harvest as soon as you see a hint of color & allow to ripen OFF the vine. Tomatoes will ripen fine inside & you'll reduce the chance of splitting & damage from bugs.

Based on the book [Ripe Tomato Revolution](#)
By [Frank Hyman](#)

History of Tomatoes

By Dave Krantz



The tomato’s journey through history was not easy and numerous misconceptions and roadblocks stood in its path to acceptance.

In the last few centuries this South American plant managed to spread across the world, becoming one of the best know food ingredients and one of the most beloved vegetables (even though technically it is classified as a fruit). Selective breeding managed to refine the tomato into a very nutritious state, filled with vitamin A, C, E, antioxidants, and more.

The exact origin of the tomato plant is unknown, although the speculation is that it

evolved from the prehistoric Nightshade plant over millions of years ago in South America (together with potatoes, tobacco, and chili peppers).

Slowly it moved north in the lands of Meso-America between Mexico and northern Costa Rica. During 500 BC, the Aztecs managed to domesticate the tomato and integrate it into their cuisine. From that point on, the tomato slowly spread across central and South America, sometimes used as a food, but also sometimes used as a hallucinogenic (a use that later caused many misconceptions about the tomato).

Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés first saw the potential of this plant when he sacked the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán and took its seeds back to Europe. Seeing that the tomato could grow without problems in the warm Mediterranean climate, the Spanish government started encouraging its production in both Europe and its distant colonies. *Continued on page 7*



*Blossom end rot
One tomato problem*



*Wasp eggs on tomato Hornworm
If you missed the worm earlier – leave it so wasps can hatch
Wasps are pollinators & the worm is already dead*

Lewes Community Garden Gives Back

From the beginning, Lewes Community Garden (LCG) has been supported by Lewes area citizens. In turn, LCG is committed to giving back to the community.



Tim Goddu sorts carrots for donation

One way is through sharing what we grow. Our largest food donation program is our Harvest Donation program. On a weekly basis, beginning in early May and ending in late October, the Garden's Outreach team sets up a produce collection station where LCG gardeners can voluntarily donate their extra organic produce. These vegetables are sorted, cleaned, and bagged. LCG volunteers deliver the produce to a local food pantry.

Since 2019 we have donated our produce to the [Community Resource Center](#) and [Teach A Person To Fish Society](#) both in Rehoboth. In 2025 we donated 563 lbs. of organic produce. In 2026 we will partner with the [Epworth Food Pantry](#).

In recent years we've expanded our Harvest Donation program by dedicating 4 garden beds used strictly for growing produce to donate. LCG Outreach team members tend the beds. This has enabled us to donate more produce.

In addition to sharing our organic produce, we hold two nonperishable food drives each year. Starting in our first year, LCG has organized a Thanksgiving food drive collecting turkeys and all the fixings. The last few years we have been partnering with the [Milton Community Food Pantry](#), given the growing need in that community.



Thanksgiving donation Milton Community Food Pantry

LCG Gives Back Cont.



Brenda Melbourn at Westside New Beginnings accepts donations from Phil Harvey

For the past five years, the LCG has set up a summer food drive that benefits [Westside New Beginnings](#) summer enrichment program. This program, located in West Rehoboth, provides educational and recreational activities to preschool and school-aged children. Our food drive provides breakfast food, healthy drinks, and snacks, which enables the New Beginnings program to spend its funds on educational programs for children.

LCG is very thankful for all the local support that has made the Lewes Community Garden possible. We look forward to our ongoing engagement with our community at large.

Vegetable Nutrition

By Dave Krantz

The healthiest vegetables are generally nutrient-dense and provide a wide range of essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber. Vary vegetables by color, texture, and flavor at every meal to gain more health benefits. Below are ten of the healthiest options.

Name	Type	Benefits	Comments
Bell Peppers	Fruit	Rich in bioactive compounds with antioxidant, antibacterial, antifungal, antidiabetic, and anti-tumor properties.	Nutrient-dense, though nutritional value varies slightly according to color.
Broccoli	Cruciferous vegetable	Vitamins A, C, and K. Rich in fiber. Good calcium, potassium, and iron source. Broccoli has powerful antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer properties.	Some research suggests that indole glucosinolate, a compound in cruciferous vegetables, interferes with thyroid hormones.
Brussels Sprouts	Cruciferous vegetable	Vitamin C and B9 (folate), antioxidants, fiber, and potassium.	Steam, roast, or sauté rather than boil to retain Vitamin C

Name	Type	Benefits	Comments
Carrots	Root vegetable	Vitamin A. Good source of beta carotene, potassium, fiber, antioxidants, vitamin K, and essential amino acids.	Cooking provides more nutrients. Eating many carotene-rich foods over several months can lead to carotenemia (yellow/orange skin).
Green Peas	Legume	Vitamins A, B, and C. Very high in fiber. Provides iron and other important nutrients. Green peas are a low-glycemic-index food.	Consume in moderation by those with IBS or impaired kidney function. Can cause digestive distress (bloating/gas) due to high fiber and FODMAP content. High purine levels can trigger gout or worsen kidney issues.
Kale	Leafy green vegetable	Vitamins A, B6, B9, C, K, and manganese. High in fiber and carotenoids, lutein, and zeaxanthin.	Raw kale provides more nutritional value than cooked.
Onions	Bulb vegetable	Antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory effects.	Contraindicated for individuals with allergies to alliums, severe IBS/digestive issues due to high fructan (FODMAP) content, or those on blood-thinning medications. Raw onions frequently cause heartburn, gas, and bloating.
Spinach	Leafy green vegetable	Vitamins A, B, and K. Minerals include manganese, iron, magnesium, copper, and calcium. Rich in antioxidants, fiber, and essential amino acids	Blocks absorption of calcium and magnesium. High amount of vitamin K can interfere with blood thinners and other medications.
Sweet Potato	Tuber	Vitamins A B, and C. Good source of fiber, potassium, beta carotene, and essential amino acids.	Caution for those with advanced Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) or calcium oxalate stones due to high potassium and oxalates.
Tomato	Fruit	Vitamin C and other antioxidants. Known for abundant lycopene, which has anti-cancer properties	It is easier for the body to absorb lycopene from cooked tomatoes rather than raw.

Outside the Fence



*Patrick Gaffney, Native Plant
Restoration Team Leader*

Outside of the fenced vegetable garden, Lewes Community Garden (LCG) is working to support the goal of sustainable organic gardening by incorporating the principles of *ecological gardening*. See [Native Plant Ecosystems: Build Habitat for Biodiversity & Food Webs](#). This is the practice of managing landscapes to support ecosystem function. Unlike conventional gardening, which prioritizes ornamental value, ecological gardening prioritizes function. The goal is to create landscapes that support insects, birds, pollinators, and soil organisms while remaining practical in a residential setting.

At LCG, our Pollinator Garden, new Sassafras Garden, and the restoration/protection of native plants benefit organic gardening by providing crops with needed pollinators while helping to control invasive insect pests.

Sassafras Garden

The Sassafras Garden at Lewes Community Garden (LCG) is a small demonstration of a native woodland path. As part of her Master Naturalist certification Linn Regulski planned and built it with the help of additional volunteers. The purpose of the garden is to show the types of native plants that can grow in a woodland setting. It provides gardeners with ideas for planting in a shady area or woodland edge in their own yard. The garden is still in its developmental stage. More plants are coming as are informational signs. The Sassafras Garden is just one example of the type of work being done by the Native Plant Restoration Team at LCG.



Linn Regulski at Sassafras Garden

History of Tomatoes Cont.

As early as the 1540s, the tomato started being produced in Spanish fields and was used regularly as a common food in the early 17th century. However, other European countries did not immediately adopt the tomato. Even though Italian nobility and scientists found out about the tomato in 1548, they used it only as a tabletop decoration fruit until the late 17th and early 18th centuries when it became the basis of their now famous tomato and ketchup industry. They cherished its beauty, and experimented with selective breeding, managing to create tomatoes of many colors and shapes. The tomato had a similar introductory fate in England. In 1547 people in England and its North American colonies deemed tomatoes unhealthy, poisonous, and unfit to eat. That changed in the mid-18th century after many advances in selective breeding from Spain and Italy.

In the early 19th century, the tomato finally arrived in Asia under the guidance of the British consul in Syria, John Barker, who directed the first cultivation efforts. By the mid-19th century, the tomato gained much popularity and its use became widespread in Syria, Iran, and China.

The modern age of the commercially grown tomato started with the efforts of Alexander W. Livingston, an American botanist and scientist who dedicated much of his life to upgrading the tomato into the common form we know today with selective breeding. His 1870s breed called Paragon became an instant success in North America, kick-starting a large tomato industry.

In 2024, worldwide tomato production reached about 186 million tons. The largest producer is China, contributing roughly 35–37% of global output, followed by India, Turkey, the United States, Egypt, and Italy.

The Numbers

- 62 beds
- 1 higher “mobility bed”
- 40 returning gardeners in 2026
- 33 new gardeners & partners for 2026
- 12 community volunteers
- \$75 yearly bed rental – sponsorships available
- 3 beds tended by volunteers and all produce donated
- 564 pounds of produce donated in 2025



How It All Began Cont.

In 2025, the city of Lewes honored Lou’s volunteer efforts by planting a tree in his honor in Zwaanendael Park, in recognition of his many years of service and volunteerism as commissioner of Zwaanendael Park and as co-founder of Lewes Community Garden.



Lou Papp gathering bamboo



Lou and Dottie at tree dedication



Groundbreaking May 2019

*Back row: Perrin Smith, Lou Papp, Michael Whitehouse, Barbee Kiker, Patrick Gaffney, Cathy Harris
Front Row: Kathy Harris, Janice Hillman*



Back row: Gary Stokes, Mary Medlock, Sue Russell, Jane Stokes
Front row: Chris Noonan Sturm, Joan Williamson, Dave Krantz, Silvia Martinez

Thank you for your donations and support!
[Greater Lewes Foundation LCG Fund](#)



Email - LewesCommunityGarden@gmail.com
Website - [Lewes Community Garden – Building a Stronger & Greener Community](#)

Building a stronger, greener community!