








GROWING TIMES

Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.

THE WEATHER:

FROM WWW.WEATHER.COM

Tuesday	91° high/ 73° low	
Wednesday	90° high/ 64° low	
Thursday	79° high/ 60° low	
Friday	81° high/ 60° low	
Saturday	80° high/ 59° low	
Sunday	82° high/ 62° low	
Monday	81° high/ 60° low	

Did You Know...

Blossom end rot appears as a black spot on the bottom of your tomatoes. It happens when calcium is unevenly distributed in the soil. A simple solution is to sprinkle some powdered milk (which contains lots of calcium) around the base of the plant before watering and then water it in. Make sure to keep the soil around the tomato plant evenly moist, it will help the calcium to stay where it belongs.

TO DO THIS WEEK:

- ✓ Be on the lookout for tomato horn worms.
- ✓ Grass clippings will keep soil moist during dry spells. Spread clippings between your plants but keep them away from stems.

HELLO GARDENERS,

This is the time of the growing season when many of you are seeing beans, squash, cucumbers, in fact a whole variety of vegetables just ready for picking—it's what we've all been waiting for so enjoy them! Make sure you keep up with picking so that your plants will continue to produce crops. Pull out plants that are no longer productive and check your Growing Guide charts for crops that can be planted now so that you can harvest them in the fall.

The hot weather is here so make sure you keep your gardens watered.

We have started our garden visits. If you have questions, call us or leave them on a piece of paper in a plastic bag in your garden so we can get you some answers. Hopefully we'll get to see some of you too!

Cindy and Kate

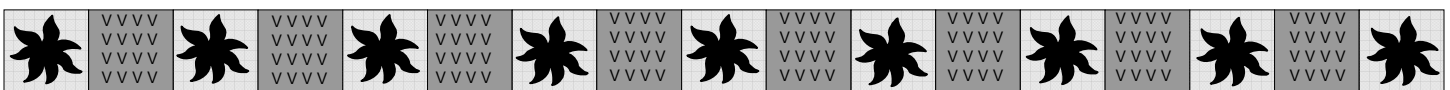
SO WHEN CAN I PICK THOSE TOMATOES?

They are sitting on the vine, bright red and plump, looking simply delicious—but is it the right time to pick them? Tomatoes can be a bit tricky since their colors vary so much and they are often ripe before they are uniform in color. Pick a tomato too early and it is hard and not very sweet or juicy—too late and it becomes tough and flat tasting.

Ripening of tomatoes begins at the bottom so that's a good place to start looking. If the skin of the tomato appears to be losing its waxy smoothness and the skin yields slightly to finger pressure, go ahead and harvest it. The shoulders (top) of the tomato are the last part to ripen and may not be the same color as the rest of the tomato, but that's OK. Store tomatoes at room temperature, otherwise they will lose some of their flavor. If they are overripe, go ahead and put them in the refrigerator.

You can freeze tomatoes whole by rinsing, coring (removing the stem) and freezing on a cookie sheet. Once frozen, store in a reclosable bag in freezer and use them for soups and sauces.

Some final thoughts: Remove tomatoes that have fallen to the ground since rotting fruit will create disease and attract insects that might affect the tomatoes on the plant. And most importantly—enjoy!!!





Garlic—scare a vampire today!

When $\frac{3}{4}$ of the tops of the garlic that you planted last year have yellowed, it's time to harvest. Check a single bulb by digging gently around it to loosen the soil, and then remove the entire plant. Try not to bruise or nick the bulbs, as they will not store as well. Bulbs should be well segmented and cloves easy to separate – if not they need to grow a bit longer (use the bulb you just picked in your next meal; fresh garlic is delicious).

Once you have dug up the bulbs, brush off excess dirt and spread them in a single layer on a screen or paper (or tie into bundles to hang) in a warm, dry, airy location out of the sun. After 2-3 weeks, when the bulbs are completely dry (outer skins are paper like), remove roots and tops leaving 1" of stem. Be sure they are completely dry: improperly dried bulbs will sprout. Store in a mesh bag (old onion bags work well) in a cool, dry location and use them as needed – delicious! Do not store unpeeled garlic in the refrigerator as it will cause the garlic to sprout.

Garlic is used in all kinds of cooking, from European to Asian, with vegetables, bread or meat. The finer a clove of garlic is chopped, the stronger it will be; and the longer it's cooked, the milder it will be. So, crushed raw garlic is the strongest, and slow-roasted whole cloves are the mildest. If you're worried about "garlic breath," chew some fresh parsley along with your meal. And a little lemon juice will get rid of the smell on your fingers, as will rubbing just-washed hands on a chrome faucet (strange but true).

Here's an easy way to roast garlic from www.homecooking.about.com:

Preheat oven to 375 deg F. Take 2 heads (or more) of garlic, spread separated and **unpeeled** cloves evenly onto cookie sheet. Drizzle with oil and bake ~30 minutes, stirring occasionally until soft. Squeeze cloves onto fresh bread or into container and store sealed in fridge for up to 3 days.

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Printed on recycled paper.

THE HOW TO'S OF SUN DRIED TOMATOES:

Most people prefer to start with Roma (plum) or sauce tomatoes since they have a higher flesh content and fewer seeds, but you can dry any tomato you want. You can do it in the sun, but that takes a while. Here is a faster method from www.homecooking.about.com:

Preheat the oven to 200 deg F. Simply remove stem core and slice the tomato in half; place sliced side up on cake racks (used for cooling cakes or cookies) . Sprinkle slightly with salt and if you want some additional flavor, some herbs. Then place the cake racks on the cooking racks in the oven. Let tomatoes dry for 6-12 hours, checking and removing the dry ones to other cake racks outside the oven to cool down. Tomatoes should remain rather flexible—like great big raisins, not brittle. Smaller tomatoes will dry faster than larger ones. Once cool, store in reclosable bags.

Tomatoes stored this way will keep indefinitely, making

this a great way to use up any extra tomatoes you just might happen to get from your garden!

To reconstitute your sun dried tomatoes for use:

1. Place dried tomatoes in heat-proof bowl
2. Completely cover with boiling water
3. Let sit for 30 minutes or until soft and pliable
4. Drain and pat dry—use as directed

You can also use the soaking liquid in soups and sauces. Leftovers can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or covered in oil and refrigerated for up to two weeks. You can also reconstitute your tomatoes in oil if the recipe calls for it: simply cover with olive oil for 24 hours before using.

