

Tomato Plants

Revised 2018

Storage Conditions

Temperature	50 to 55°F (10 to 12.8°C) with moderate air movement
Relative Humidity	85 to 90%
Storage Period	5 to 10 days

Many of the vegetable transplants used by growers are greenhouse-grown plug-type plants that have been grown in cell-trays. Tomato plants are widely grown and are shipped with the soilless growing medium around the roots. They may continue to grow during shipping if temperatures are adequate. Temperatures of 50 to 55°F (10 to 12.8°C) are desirable for shipping and storage of plug-type plants. Tomato plants are chilling sensitive. Slightly cooler temperatures during shipping or storage would have the desired effect of reducing growth, but growth after transplanting may be retarded. Tomato plants that are chilled prior to planting may have an increase in misshapen, unmarketable fruit.

Field-grown transplants (bare-root) may be packed loose in a shipping container or they may be bundled and wrapped in paper with moist peat around the roots. These are often packed in wire-bound crates and can be stored at 50 to 55°F (10 to 12.8°C) without adversely affecting survival or fruit yield, provided the combined time for handling, transit, and storage does not exceed 10 days.

It is extremely important that the plants are not over-packed or packed wet for shipment or storage.

Although a maximum temperature of 55°F (12.8°C) is desirable, plants may arrive at their destination with higher temperatures inside the containers, especially when plants are shipped without refrigeration during hot weather. Overheated plants may have more losses from rotting inside the containers, plant pathogens such as early blight that are on the plants may begin their growth, leaves may be discolored, and survival after planting may be reduced.

Containers should be opened when the plants are received. If containers are tightly packed, remove several bundles from each carton to allow for air circulation and for cooling, if needed. Plants should be kept dry. Cool plants should be protected from warm, moist air to prevent condensation from forming on the plants. Do not stand plants in trays of water if they have wilted, as this may spread bacterial diseases from infected to healthy plants.

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