Sutton Foster's Tomato Growing Tips



I just finished reading Sutton Foster's book, "Hooked: How Crafting Saved My Life." I got it because she's crocheting on the cover of the book and that's my go-to craft. It's also her go-to craft, however she enjoys many other crafts as well. She even mentions gardening in the book. Specifically, she talks about the memories of her dad growing tomato plants. Moreover, she provides his top ten tips for growing "the perfect sandwich-sized fruit."

Is Gardening a Craft? An Art? A Hobby?

I don't particularly delineate between these things, and I get the sense that Sutton Foster doesn't either. She definitely knows the difference between a hobby and a job. She's a

television and Broadway actress as a profession. She uses crafting to calm, soothe, restore, heal her, something she's been doing since she was a kid. She mentions cross-stitch, knitting, collage, glass art, painting, drawing, baking, and gardening throughout her book. In terms of the roles they play in her life, they seem relatively interchangeable. Gardening can be a craft, an art, a hobby. Of course, it can also be a job, and then it's a little bit different.

Tomato Garden Memories

Foster had a complex childhood, and her parents had a complicated, pained relationship. But she remembers gardening as one of the things that they all enjoyed together. Her dad was the one who loved to garden. He planted a variety of different things, and she planted with him. Her mother got involved a bit as well, collecting the seeds in the fall for replanting in the spring. And they all enjoyed the tomato sandwiches made from the tomatoes grown in their own garden.

10 Tomato Growing Tips

In brief, here are Sutton Foster's ten tomato-growing tips, which are actually her "Papa Bob's Tips."

1. It all starts with great soil.

This is true of most things that you plant in your garden, of course. Don't neglect this part of gardening; it's foundational.

2. Pick the right tomatoes.

She recommends beefsteak tomatoes. They're hearty and perfect for those sandwiches her family loved to eat.

3. Plant tomatoes in the sun.

Specifically, she recommends a spot that gets 4-6 hours of daily sunlight. Of course, this depends on the tomatoes that you choose to plant as well as environmental factors. But it's a good starting point.

4. Plant tomatoes to grow upwards.

You want to use a DIY trellis, tomato cages, or other support to assist the vines of your tomato plants to grow vertically.

5. Focus on growing the main vines of the tomato plant.

Foster explains that tomato plants have lots of little extra growth shoots that try to grow off of the main vine. However, you should pull those off. This allows the plant to concentrate its energy on great growth along the main vine. I didn't actually know this tip myself.

6. Avoid overwatering your tomato plants.

This is one of the most common causes of tomatoes that aren't growing properly.

7. Use fertilizer.

She recommends a name brand liquid fertilizer that you apply every two weeks. However, you can make. DIY fertilizer or choose your own favorite. Follow the instructions that are relevant to your specific tomatoes as well as to the fertilizer you're using.

8. Fight off bugs.

Bugs love tomato plants. They also often kill them. There are many methods of dealing with them, of course. Foster

recommends planting marigolds near your tomato plants because they are a natural insect repellent. Furthermore, she points out that if you pop the head off of marigolds at the end of the season, the seeds are neatly stored right there for you to collect and replant in the spring.

9. Pick tomatoes when they are not quite ripe.

Why? Because the plant still has more opportunity to grow additional tomatoes on that vine. However, it needs the space and ability to do so.

10. Ripen tomatoes on the counter.

Place them in the sun. Let them fully ripen. Enjoy!

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- Reasons Why Tomato Foliage Curl
- To Prune or Not to Prune: Keeping Tomatoes in Check