

The No-Cost Way to Increased Tomato Yields: Pruning



Hi, everyone! Apologies for the late posting.

I've known what I wanted to talk about this week for a while, but honestly, it's tough to explain it well without a visual aid. Pruning tomatoes is one of the tasks that I either excel at or fail miserably to keep up with. I'm either diligent in staking, pruning, and keeping my tomatoes organized and tidy or I forget to stay on top of the chore and end up with sprawling plants.

Here's an excellent pruning guide to help you out with the task this summer:

Different gardeners have different pruning preferences. You

can choose to lightly prune your plants or aggressively remove branches as you see fit. With a bit of trial and error, you'll find a method that works for you.

Why prune tomatoes?

There are a few reasons to keep up with this garden chore:

- **Prevents disease:** Let your tomato plants sprawl on the ground, and they're more likely to pick up disease from contaminated soil.
- **Improves air circulation:** This is especially true if you're planting things closely together (like I do with the Square Foot Gardening method).
- **Better yield:** If your tomato plant is busy throwing its energy into growing big, green leaves, you'll undoubtedly have fewer tomatoes. Pruning help re-route that energy to where it matters: growing big juicy tomatoes!
- **Controls growth:** Pruning prevents your plants from getting out of control, which allows for easier upkeep and maintenance. If your plant growth is left unchecked, foliage may shade nearby plants and completely block the sun for newly emerging seedlings. Pruning regularly also allows you the opportunity to inspect your plants carefully.

When should I not prune?

Don't bother pruning determinate tomato plants – these are varieties that set all their fruit at once. Pruning will significantly lower your yield.

If you don't feel like pruning, don't bother. There's no rule that says you NEED to. Sure, there are benefits, but you can also grow tasty tomatoes without the effort of pruning.