

Make sure you put toppers on canes to protect from eye injuries.



## GROW YOUR OWN - Tomatoes

Growing tomatoes with children is a fun way to get them interested in gardening, especially cherry tomatoes as they're sweet and children can pick and eat them directly off the tomato plant.

### You will need:

A packet of tomato seeds (there are many varieties to choose from), gloves, clear polythene bag

Homemade newspaper pot/ toilet roll with sealed bottom/ yogurt pot with holes in bottom or egg box.

Enriched potting compost / Plant labels – make your own

### How to grow:

Fill the pot with compost, place the seeds on the surface and then cover. Place on a warm, sunny windowsill and cover with a polythene bag.

Tomatoes need at least 18cm to germinate.

Prick out into 5–8cm pots once two 'seed' leaves have formed. Biodegradable pots, as above are good as they will allow you to plant the tomatoes out without disturbing the roots.

When the leaves of the tomatoes have formed, plant into ground, pots or growbags, supported by canes pushed firmly in the compost.

When plants about 2.5cm long, remove the side shoots regularly, this is called 'pinching out'. Side shoots grow where the base of the leaf joins the main stem (leaf node).

Tomatoes need water so keep the compost moist. Feed weekly with tomatoes feed. Watch in amazement as the fruit swells and then changes colour to a deep red. Enjoy your first home-grown tomato!

