

**OVERVIEW OF APRIL 17, 2019 SPEAKER TOPIC
TOMATOES
BY FRED MULLEN**

DETERMINATE TOMATOES or “bush” tomatoes, are hybrid varieties that grow to a compact height (generally 3-4’). Determinates stop growing when fruit sets on the top bud. All the tomatoes from the plant ripen at approximately the same time (usually over a period of 1-2 weeks). They require a limited amount of staking for support and are perfectly suited for container planting (at least a 5 gallon container using a mixture of 1/3 top soil, 1/3 compost and 1/3 vermiculite). Most popular variety is Celebrity.

INDETERMINATE TOMATOES will grow and produce fruit until killed by frost. They can reach heights of up to 12’ although 6’ is normal. Indeterminates will bloom, set new fruit and ripen fruit all at the same time throughout the season. They require substantial staking for support. Popular varieties are heirlooms and Big Boys.

FOR EITHER VARIETY:

Do not plant until the soil has warmed up.

Do not cover with mulch until later (included in the following instructions).

Remove suckers (the growth at the “V” between the main stalk and the each leaf).

Once you see the first sign of the fruit bloom remove ALL leaves from the main stem below the fruit bloom. Early blight comes from the soil. If you notice any “sick” leaves cut the bad portion off before it reaches the main stem.

At this time use a fungicide (chlorothalonil) spray. Spray up and coat underside of remaining leaves.

Our soil is on the side of calcium deficient which causes blossom enrot. You can use a spray to prevent this.

At this time you may use mulch to help retain heat and moisture.

Spray with fungicide as above after every rain.

When the fruit bloom is open give the flower a slight flick to help fertilize the plant.

AT THIS TIME:

DETERMINATE TOMATOES will produce fruit at the top of the plant for approximately 1-2 weeks and then can be removed from the garden bed or pot. This variety can grow well in your landscaping.

INDETERMINATE TOMATOES need to be trellised and will continue to produce fruit. Therefore each time after picking fruit you will need to continue the suckering , removal of leaves, and spraying process.