

*From The Garden Doctor's Notebook*

# **Neal's Growing System for the**



## **"APPLE of LOVE"**

In this brochure we are going to give you one of the planting methods for the "Apple of Love". This method can be used for individual planting, row planting, or as in this brochure the six foot circle concentrated growing system. Tomatoes are one of the easiest of all vegetables to grow, but they do require two main elements. One is preparation and the other is prevention. They are one of the few vegetables native to the Americas. It was first propagated in the U.S. by Thomas Jefferson in 1781, however it , was not .until 1835 that the tomato was generally cultivated in the United States. Before then it was considered a highly poisonous fruit. In order to get over this myth English, French and Italian s.eed salesmen labeled .the tomato the "Love Apple" or the "Apple of Love". Initially there were only a few varieties of this .vegetable available. While you are reading this brochure a tomato of a different size, shape and or color is being developed.

The first requirement for our concentrated growing system is an 8' square section in full sun with a gently southern slope and rich, well drained soil, or as close as possible. Tomatoes should not be located where you have grown potatoes in the past or near Walnut trees. In early Spring remove any debris or sod on top of the ground. Till the soil as deep as possible and grade the area so that it is mounded in the center. Spray the entire area with Vapam or another soil fumigant. Cover with clear or green plastic and secure well. This will increase the soil temperature and the effect of the soil fumigant. Remove plastic on warm sunny days until soil is thoroughly dry. Remove the plastic around the 15th of April. The soil should again be tilled. Make a circle by running a string 3 to 4 feet out from a post driven in the center of the circle. Evenly space 5 holes around this circle. Dig holes 2' x 2' x 2 1/2" deep. Place soil from the holes in the center of the mound. This soil should be layered with a mixture of 75 pounds of sand, 50 pounds of peat, 10 pounds of lime, 10 pounds of gypsum, 5 pounds of bone meal, 5 cups Epsom Salt and 5 pounds of any low nitrogen all purpose fertilizer. (These concentrations are assuming that you have a high clay or poor soil.) The soil should then be well spaded or tilled. Place six inches of manure, grass clippings, or compost mixed with 1/2 cup of triple phosphate in the bottom of all holes. Fill with hot water to which 1/4 cup of fish emulsion has been added. If water takes more than 4 hours to drain through the soil, sand should be added to the base. Backfill holes to within 3 inches of ground level. Grade the remaining soil so that it is high in the center. Add to 1 gallon of hot water 4 tblsp. fish emulsion, and appropriate amount of low nitrogen high phosphorous fertilizer such as Garden Life and 2 tblsp. calcium (Tomato Saver). Fill each depression and allow to soak into the soil completely. Recover the entire area with plastic. Around the 10th to 15th day of May it is considered safe to plant tomatoes, however soil must be 65 degrees before tomato plants will grow well. If you do wish to plant earlier, watch weather conditions closely because newly installed plants are extremely sensitive to cold weather and cool soil. When transplanting the tomato be very careful not to overly disrupt the root structure of the plant. Remove all bottom branches to within 2-3 inches of the top of the plant, (regardless of the height of the plant). Dig holes in the center of the 2' square to accommodate the full height of the plant. Place 2 tblsp. Magamp in bottom of holes and cover with 3 inches of soil. Install plant, and mud in with Vitamin B-1 and water. Place a paper cup with the bottom cut out down over the top of the plant and push down into the soil to a depth of approximately 1/2 to 1 inch. This will reduce the damage caused by early winds and cutworms. Add a 1/2 inch layer of vermiculite or perlite to the 2' square planting areas. Place a clear plastic one gallon milk container with the bottom cut out over the top of all the young tomato plants. Be sure to take the top off of the milk container and to install air holes around the sides of the container to assure proper ventilation and air circulation inside your mini-greenhouse.

Six to eight inches on either side of each plant install a 2 or 5 pound coffee can with holes punched in the bottom. Place in the bottom of the can 2" of manure, 3 tblsp. bone meal and 1 tblsp. Epsom salt. Fill with lukewarm solution of Garden Life fertilizer and vitamin B-1. The cans will be used for all future waterings and fertilizer. Tomato plants should only be watered when they wilt. Use only B-1 until plants blossom. At this time the plastic should be returned to the mound to maintain ground heat but keep away from young tomato plants to avoid sun scald. Stake plants as soon as possible. There are two different methods for this. One is to stake the plants individually, the other is to install a six foot fence around the inside perimeter of the tomatoes. Be sure to leave access to the center. Once the plant has outgrown the confines of the plastic milk carton, it should be removed. Gradually introduce your new plants to the sun. At this time the soil should be adequately warmed for the removal of the plastic. Remove weeds and scratch the soil surface. Add 1/8th of an inch of sand to the entire area. Place 6 inches of straw, compost or other mulch over the entire area, being sure not to cover your watering cans. Add compost as available. Dust mulch with insect fungicide combination.

When blossoms first appear, mix Garden Life fertilizer, calcium, and Vitamin B-1 with 1 gallon of water and fill each can. A thorough spraying of the entire plant with Tomato Saver or Blossom Set will result in early pollination and fruit development. Apply all fertilizer and chemicals according to label directions. Do not add grass clippings to the center compost area until they have aged 2 weeks and especially avoid any that have been sprayed with a weed killer. All gardens require one inch of water per week. With mulching less watering is necessary. Every other time you water apply Garden Life or Magamp through the can feeders. Starting with the first appearance of blossoms a standard multi-purpose spray or dust of insecticide and fungicide should be utilized. The planting of Basil near tomato plants will help in their growth and development and will add flavor. This will also help to repel harmful insects. We recommend that as soon as the plastic is removed, plant 2 of the following in the immediate area of the plants: chives, garlic, mint, onions, carrots, parsley, wormwood or celery. Asparagus and tomatoes benefit each other. Another addition to this concentrated growing system would be cucumbers of the bush variety. These should be planted on top of the compost mound. Around the outer border of your "Love Apple System" plant marigolds or nasturtiums.

With the use of natural insect repellents and friends of the tomato plant you should reduce your insect and disease problems considerably. Try to avoid locating near radishes, peas, corn, broccoli, beans, dill, potatoes, cabbage, fennel, horseradish, nightshade, or Kohlrabi, as all of these are damaging to the growth and health of the tomato plant. (Insects do little damage compared to the disease they transfer). The largest problem in any and all vegetable gardens is over or under watering. Your plants require no more than constant and even availability of nutrients and moisture. Not the excess. Your second crop of tomatoes are planted from July 1 to August 1. A third crop of tomato plants may be installed in 3-5 gallon containers which are recessed 1/2 way into the ground. This should be done around July 30th to August 15th. The plants for this planting can be taken from strong suckers on your existing plants or raised from seed. In the fall when the first danger of frost appears, gradually introduce them into your home. They will produce fruit far into the winter months. The selection of tomatoes for this particular usage should be the short bushy plants. Before bringing any plant into the house for Fall, they should be sprayed twice with an insecticide and fungicide control. House tomatoes must be hand pollinated. This can be done by using a paint brush and dabbing from blossom to blossom. Do not rely on any one variety of tomato plant. Try something new each year. Place sliced apples around your tomatoes to speed up ripening inside or outside of the house.

The second year is a piece of cake!

For more information, refer to Harold's Helpful Hints.

To extend growing season if a frost is predicted turn on a fine mist sprinkler over tomatoes from 10:00 p.m. till 8:00 a.m.

Late in the season remove 80 percent of all foliage. Remove all blossoms and fruit too small to ripen. Pull up plant with fruit attached before the first hard freeze. Hang upside down in the basement. Fruit will continue to ripen for weeks.

## TOMATO PRODUCT LIST

**Fertilizers:** Garden Life Tomato Grow, Miracle Grow for Tomatoes, Tomato Booster, Fertilome Low Salt Tomato Food, Magamp, Neals Organic VegGrow.

**Sprays & Dusts:** Multi-Purpose containing insect and disease control (i.e. Sevin & Zineb, Malathion & Captan).

**For Soil Burn Problems:** Vapan

**Special Additives:** Tomato Save, Blossom Set, Vitamin B-1, Fish Emulsion, Epsom Salt, Bone Meal, Gypsum.

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