



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/tomatoes-in-february>

Released: Feb. 13, 2025

It's February: Are you thinking about tomatoes -- yet?

K-State horticulture expert gets you ready for planting this year's crop

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan – It's still nearly three months before Kansas gardeners begin to put tomato plants into the ground, yet Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini says it's not too early for gardeners to set themselves up for a bountiful season.

"Most of the varieties available to home gardeners are indeterminate," Domenghini said.

Indeterminate plants are traditional tomatoes that continue growing throughout the season with vines that can reach over five feet long. They are capable of continuing fruit production all season, unless disease or frost interfere.

Determinate tomatoes are more compact, typically less than three feet tall. Their fruiting period is shorter as well, but can still result in a plentiful harvest.

"If there is space, you may want to grow a combination of both," Domenghini said. "The determinates can provide a large harvest for canning, and the indeterminates spread out the harvest of fresh tomatoes for eating."

Domenghini said gardeners will benefit from choosing tomato varieties with strong disease resistance characteristics.

In Kansas, tomatoes are generally planted in early- to mid-May, or when daytime temperatures are above 70 degrees Fahrenheit and the frost-free date has passed. In some areas, such as the northwest part of the state, conditions might not be right for planting tomatoes until the middle of May or a bit later, according to Domenghini.

Even though indeterminate varieties produce fruit throughout the season, "our hot Kansas summers often cause a dry spell in production," Domenghini said.

Tomatoes are less likely to set fruit when night temperatures remain above 75 F and day temperatures are above 95 F. Hot, dry winds make the situation worse, Domenghini said.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to hortsupport@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

-30-

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the wellbeing of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

For more information:
Cynthia Domenghini
Cdom@ksu.edu