

TOMATO SUCKERS

SHOULD YOU REMOVE THEM?

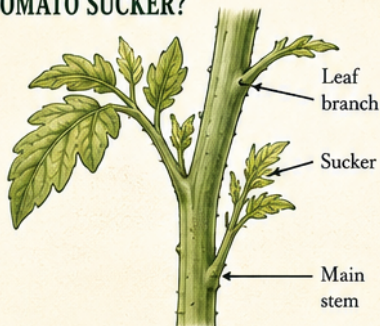
How proper pruning produces healthier plants and bigger harvests.



1 WHAT IS A TOMATO SUCKER?

A tomato sucker is a new shoot that grows in the "V" between the main stem and a leaf branch.

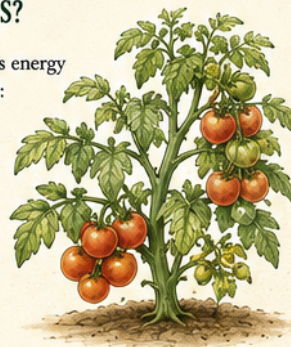
If left alone, it becomes another full stem that will produce leaves, flowers and fruit.



2 WHY REMOVE SUCKERS?

Removing suckers directs the plant's energy into the main stem, which results in:

- ✓ Larger, higher quality tomatoes
- ✓ Better airflow and less disease
- ✓ More sunlight to ripen fruit
- ✓ Easier harvesting and pruning
- ✓ Stronger plants with less stress

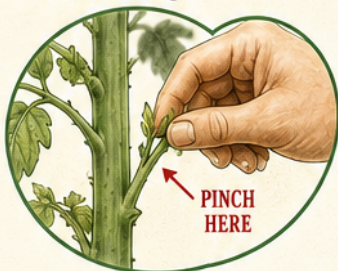


3 WHEN TO PRUNE

The best time to remove a sucker is when it is **2-4 inches** long. Simply pinch it off with your thumb and forefinger.

- ✓ If it becomes woody or large, use clean pruning shears.

- ✗ Prune during dry conditions to help prevent disease.



4 WHEN NOT TO PRUNE

Pruning is best for indeterminate tomatoes that grow all season and keep producing. Do not heavily prune determinate or bush tomatoes—they set most of their fruit on the stems they naturally produce.

✓ INDETERMINATE

Remove suckers weekly.



Examples: Beefsteak, Better Boy, Big Beef, Sungold, Sweet 100, Cherokee Purple, etc.

✗ DETERMINATE

Do not remove most suckers.



Examples: Roma, Celebrity, Bush Early Girl, Patio varieties, and most paste tomatoes.

WHAT REALLY HELPS

1 Inspect twice each week.



Catching suckers early makes the job quick and keeps plants tidy.

2 Pinch suckers while small.



Small suckers remove in seconds and waste no plant energy.

3 Train a single main leader.



One main stem means more energy, bigger fruit and easier care.

4 Support vines as they grow.



Clips or twine keep plants secure and upright all season.

5 Maintain good airflow.



Space plants properly and remove excess foliage at the bottom.



GOOD TO KNOW

Tomatoes are forgiving plants. If you accidentally miss a sucker, simply remove it the next time you inspect your plants.

Consistency matters more than perfection!



✧ WHEN TO LEAVE THEM ALONE ✧

Do not heavily prune these types of tomatoes:

- ✗ Roma and paste tomatoes
- ✗ Bush and patio varieties
- ✗ Celebrity and other determinate types

Light pruning is fine, but removing too many stems reduces the number of flowers and tomatoes.



Five minutes each week can save hours of work later.

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