



TOMATO PRUNING 101!

WHY?

Pruning means to cut back part of a plant. Tomatoes that are unpruned will continue to grow many, many stems, producing fewer fruits and promoting disease and pests by overcrowding or touching the ground

HOW?

1. Assess Your Tomato Plant

Find the Main Stem of your tomato, follow that stem with your eyes and determine what is growing off of the Stem. Is it a Leaf? Is it a Sucker? Is it a Flower Cluster? It is important to remember that we only want to prune off SUCKERS because Flower Clusters become tomatoes and Leaves are needed to photosynthesize!

2. Prune with Clean Tools

Make sure you have washed all of the tools you will prune your tomato plant with and wash tools between tomatoes! This is important because your tools can easily spread diseases from tomato to tomato plant!

3. Tie Your Tomato to a Support

The last step after cutting back Suckers is to tie the tomato to a support. This will help the tomato grow heavy fruits without leaning or breaking and help you find suckers as you prune the plant back during the summer!

RULES TO FOLLOW:

RULE 1
Get plants off the ground.

RULE 2
Give plants room.

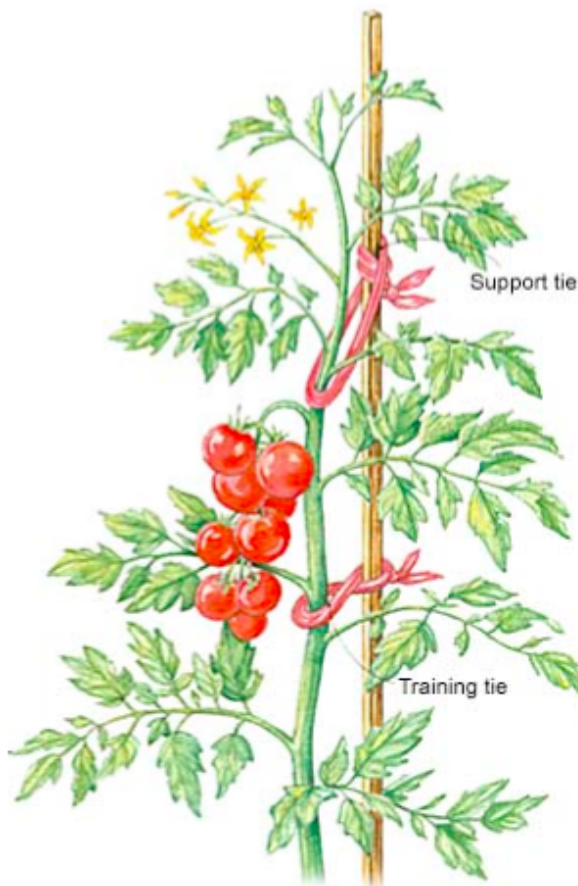
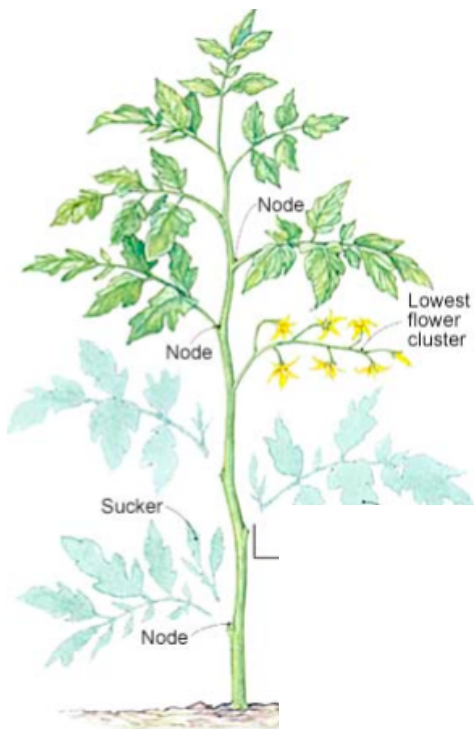
RULE 3
Never prune or tie plants when the leaves are wet.

Assess Your Tomato Plant :

Note how a tomato plant grows with 3 kinds of branches off the stem:

1. **Flower Clusters**
2. **Leaves**
3. **Suckers**

The Suckers we want to remove grow in the "elbow," or "node," that is created when a Leaf branch grows. The sucker will grow straight out the elbow and begin to grow leaves and set out flower clusters, trying to create more fruit. This takes energy from the plant and stops the plant from producing fewer, but better and faster yields!



How to Tie

There are two reasons to tie tomatoes, and there's a different tie for each one. Train the leader to grow upright with a loose, figure-eight tie. To support burgeoning fruit, loop a long tie above a fruit cluster, and tie it to the stake 6 to 10 inches higher. Loop the tie twice around the stake and tie it tightly so the tomatoes don't pull it down with their weight.