



WRITING SAMPLE

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Gold Nugget Tomato Varieties

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A visit to a garden center in springtime can reveal a bewildering number of choices when it comes to the enormous number of tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*) cultivars available. Each tag promises tasty fruit ready for harvest in just a couple months' time. Which one to choose? For gardeners looking for an attractive cherry tomato plant that produces abundant fruit, a sweet yellow variety that goes by golden or gold nugget (*Solanum lycopersicum* "Gold Nugget") might be a good bet.

Golden Nugget Tomatoes

Sweet and nearly seedless, the meaty fruit of "Gold Nugget" tomatoes is minimally acidic. Good for small gardens, they are low, ground-hugging plants that don't spread very far. Despite their compact size (2 to 3 feet tall), these plants bear heavily. Their golden yellow, round to slightly oval fruit grows to about 1 inch in diameter. This determinate tomato variety produces fruit in about 60 days.

Tomato Blight

"Gold Nugget" tomatoes are susceptible to blight, which is a fungal disease that can pop up in moist conditions. To control or avoid blight, rotate your crops, planting tomatoes in the same place only once in three or four years. Remove and destroy tomato vines when the plant has died, and plow under remaining crop refuse. Remove diseased lower leaves, as these can be a source of fungus spores that help spread the disease. Water your plants at the base to avoid splashing water, which can spread the spores.

When and Where to Plant

Plant "Gold Nugget" tomato transplants as early as you can in your area, when overnight temperatures consistently remain above 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Tomatoes love heat and sun, so select an area of your garden that gets at least six hours of sun a day. If you live in a

southern U.S. region, you can place plants where they'll get a bit of afternoon shade so they won't burn up in summer's hottest months.

Tomato Care

When planting your tomatoes, mix rich compost into the soil. Dig the planting hole deep enough so you can bury the first set of leaves; this allows the plant to produce more roots. Stake or cage your tomatoes at planting time so that you don't damage the spreading roots later. Water young plants enough so that their roots don't dry out, and then water growing plants once a week or every five days if it's unseasonably hot. Water directly on the soil, not on the leaves. Occasionally turning the compost and soil around the plant's stem will encourage new growth and repeated fruiting, as will trimming some of the plant's upper leaves