

H O U S I N G The Portland Observer

Growing the perfect tomato

Growing terrific tomatoes during summer, there is nothing like picking a fresh tomato off the vine, slicing it up for a sandwich, or just munching it whole.

Choose a tomato that is resistant to diseases that have been present in your garden such as Verticillium wilt, Fusarium wilt, Nematodes or Tobacco mosaic virus. Look on the tag for initials V. F. N. or T. to indicate resistance to these diseases.

There are two kinds of tomatoes, determinate and indeterminate. De-

terminate tomatoes stop growing and flowering when they reach a certain height. People in short season areas like to plant these kinds of tomatoes because they produce lots of fruit in a short period of time. They tend to take up less space than the indeterminate varieties. Indeterminate tomatoes continue to grow and fruit all season until frost kills them. These generally require staking or a cage.

The best tomatoes are the ones you start from seed. To do this, you have to sow your seeds 6-7 weeks

before the frost-free date in your area. Some areas, however, have very short growing seasons and would do better by buying seedlings at the nursery or by mail-order.

Tomatoes like very rich soil with either compost or composted manure mixed in. Use ample fertilizer that is low in nitrogen. The nitrogen makes them produce more leaves than fruit.

With a deep root system, tomatoes enjoy a deep watering, down to at least 18 inches. It's better to water

heavily than just sprinkling each day. At the same time, they don't like to be left "swampy", or standing in water. The top inch needs to dry out between watering. Consistent watering prevents cracking and end rot.

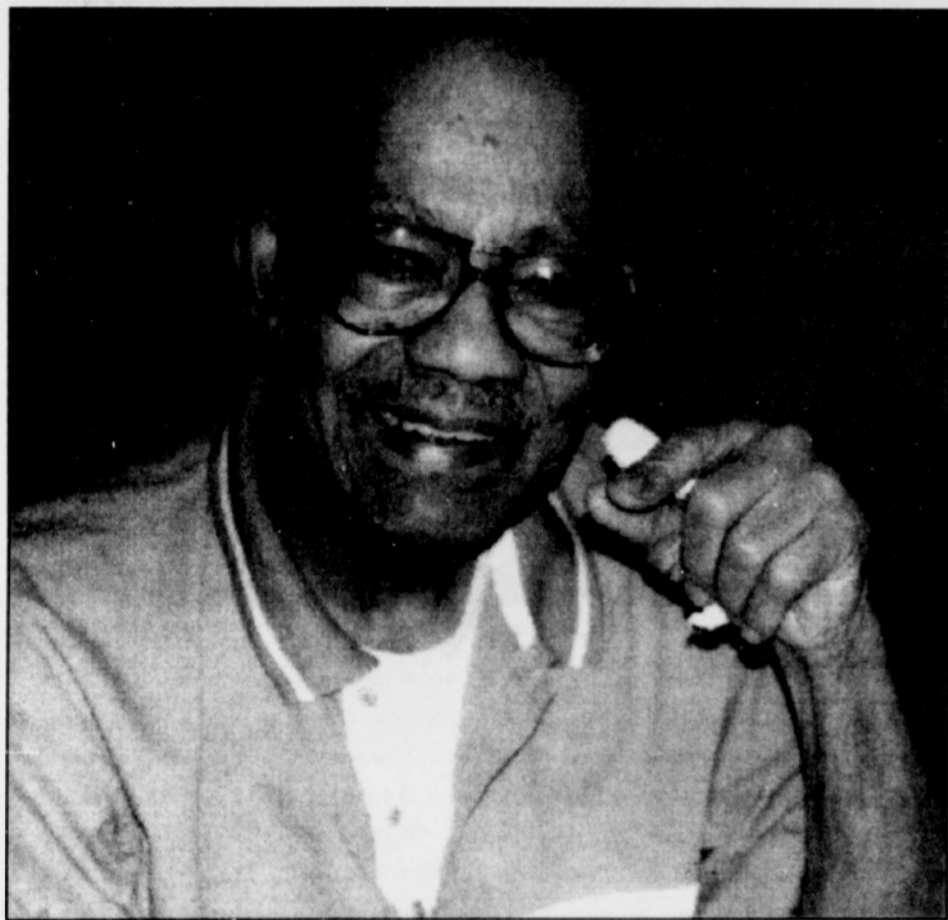
Plant the tomatoes in a very sunny area of the garden. This area should get at least six hours of sun. Don't plant anything tall in front of them. Give the tomatoes a place of their own.

Dig a hole with your trowel or your hand if your soil allows. If you

have nice sturdy plants, set them straight into a hole burying them a few inches deeper than they stood in the pot. If the plants are long and leggy, however, then lay the plant on its side and bury the stem to the topmost leaves. This makes sturdier plants because new roots will grow along the stem that has been buried. Water immediately after planting. Mulch to retain soil moisture only when the soil has thoroughly warmed up.

A cage made out of a 5 foot long

sheet of concrete reinforcing mesh, which was rolled into a cylinder and staked into the ground. Make sure the size of the holes in the mesh is wide enough for your hand and the tomato to go through at harvesting time. Support your tomato plants with support branches or bamboo poles, weaving vine or raffia around the branches. Wrap raffia around the top of the plant, with the pole attached, to secure. Do not plant tomatoes near corn and plants of the same family.



Chaucer Robinson of Portland is cited for his successful career as the founder of the Good Street Credit Union, the first black credit institution in Dallas, Texas. Robinson also recently celebrated his 85th birthday. (Photo by Mark Washington)

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Stand For Children

African-Americans Mobilize Local Action For Stand For Healthy Children Day 1997

Mrs. Rosa Parks and Ms. Rosie O'Donnell Named Honorary Co-Chairs

African-Americans across the country are mobilizing thousands of people to Stand for Healthy Children in local communities on June 1, 1997, national Stand For Children Day founder, Marian Wright Edelman announced recently. Mrs. Rosa Parks, mother of the modern civil rights movement, and national talk show producer and host, Ms. Rosie O'Donnell, will serve as honorary co-chairs for Stand For Healthy Children.

On the heels of the historic Stand For Children rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on June 1 last year, the 1997 mobilization will include hundreds of local efforts to ensure that every child gets a healthy start in life - with the health coverage children need to grow and thrive, and healthy communities that allow children to breathe clean air, walk safely to school, and learn unimpaired by violence or untreated health problems.



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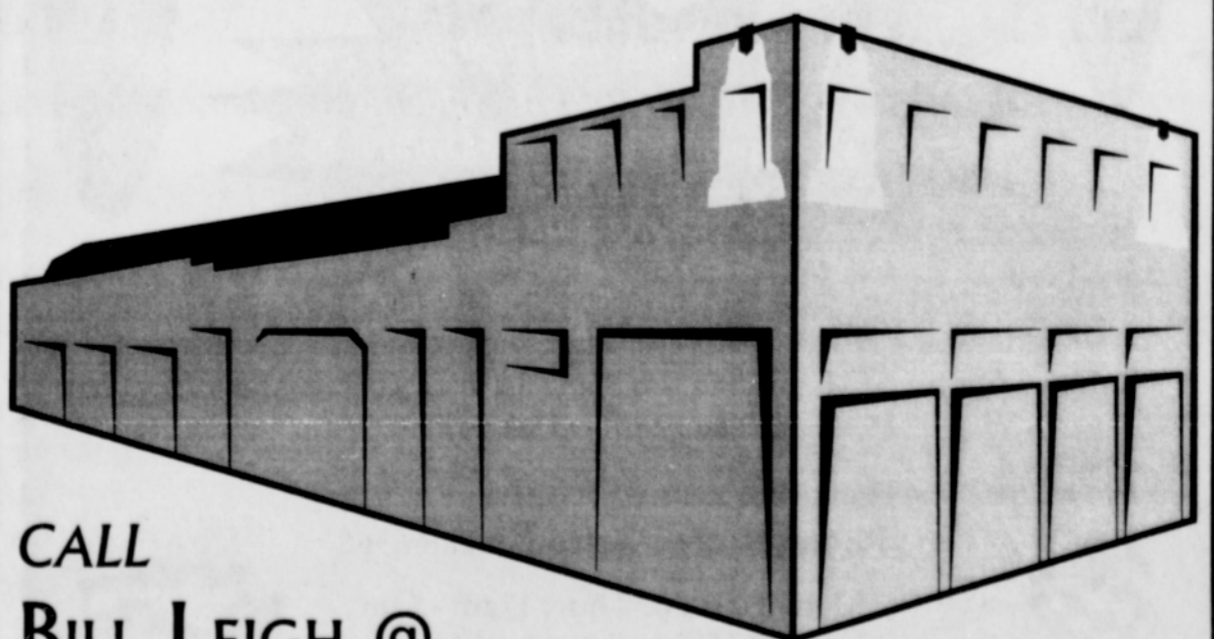
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