

## Pruning Determinate Tomatoes

Prune the plants by clipping off the side shoots/axillary shoots till the first flower cluster. Allow all the axillary shoots to develop after the first flower cluster for optimum yield (Fig. 6) Determinate varieties require minimal staking and doesn't require heavy pruning for good crop yield.



Fig. 7. Determinate Variety

### Step 2: Observe the plants and decide when to prune

- ✓ Check for tiny new branches/suckers growing between the stem of the plant & remove them at tender stage (Fig. 7).
- ✓ Retaining the suckers will lead to multiple stems and smaller fruit size.
- ✓ Clip off all the lower branches or leaves up to 20-30cm since the parts act as first contact point of soil pathogens or soil-dwelling insects.



Fig. 5. Plants trained along wooden poles

### 3. Pruning: removal of side and lower shoots, unwanted or axillary and diseased shoots or parts to:

- ✓ Enhance vigor and productivity of plants.
- ✓ Divert nutrients to flower clusters and fruits on the main stem & increase fruit set.
- ✓ Allow efficient air circulation & prevent diseases.
- ✓ Use clean, sharp, scissor-type hand clippers/secateurs for tomato pruning.

### 4. How to Prune tomatoes?

#### Step 1: Determine the variety you are growing

#### Pruning Indeterminate Tomatoes

- ✓ Prune indeterminate varieties to one, two or three stems/leaders (figure 5).
- ✓ Allow two or three side shoots to develop (one below the first flower cluster and the other below second stem).



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## Staking and Pruning Tomatoes



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Staking and pruning are the two common practices that can help tomato plants stay healthier, bear larger fruits and result in early fruit maturity.

### 1. Staking: supporting plants with sticks/other materials to:

- ✓ Provide support to keep the plants off the ground.
- ✓ Assist plants in their upright growth.
- ✓ Prevent lodging of plants.
- ✓ Reduce losses from fruit rot or soil borne diseases by preventing fruit clusters from touching soil.



**Fig. 1.** Pruned tomato plants Staked using bamboo

## 2. Staking Techniques

### Single staking

- ✓ Place the stake within an inch or two of the plant's base and tie the plant loosely to it. (Fig. 2).
- ✓ Insert the stakes into the ground 6 -12 inch deep depending on the soil type, providing rigid support.
- ✓ Stakes can be made out of wood, bamboo, plastic or metal pole.



**Fig. 2.** Single Staking of tomato

### Double Staking

- ✓ Similar to single stake, a double stake is created by adding a second stake or by using jute rope/string (Fig. 3).
- ✓ Place the stakes on the opposite side around the plant and tie each stake to the developing plants.



**Fig. 3.** Double Staking using bamboo and jute rope

### String method

- ✓ Erect 2-2.5m long poles on either side of ridges for stretching GI wire.
- ✓ Stretch a hay wire at a height of 2m from the ground on the poles erected.
- ✓ Attach jute ropes or strings to the hay wire exactly overhead the plants.
- ✓ Trail the plants up along the ropes/strings. (Fig. 4 & Fig. 5).



**Fig. 4.** Plants trained along jute ropes