

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "DETERMINATE", "INDETERMINATE" & "SEMI-INDETERMINATE" TOMATOES AND THE NEWEST 4th CATEGORY?

1. **DETERMINATE** varieties of tomatoes, originally developed for machine harvesting are also called "**bush**" tomatoes. These are varieties that grow to a fixed mature size, usually 3-4 ft. tall, and ripen all their fruit in a short period, usually about 2-3 weeks. Once this first flush of fruit has ripened, the plant will begin to diminish in vigor and will set little to no new fruit. Despite their compact size, staking or caging is still recommended, since the concentrated fruit set can contribute considerable weight to the branches. They should NOT be pruned or "suckered" as it severely reduces the crop. They will perform relatively well in a container with the minimum size of 5-7 gallons, 10 gal. has been found to be ideal.

2. **INDETERMINATE** varieties of tomatoes are also called "**vining**" tomatoes. Almost all heirlooms and many cherry tomatoes are in this category. They will grow and produce fruit until killed by frost or neglect (insect & disease outbreaks) and can reach heights of up to 10 feet, although 6 feet is considered the norm. They will bloom, set new fruit and ripen fruit all at different stage and the same time throughout the growing season. They require substantial caging and/or staking for support and pruning and the removal of suckers is practiced by many but is not mandatory. Because of the need for substantial support and the size of the plants, indeterminate varieties are not usually recommended as container plants.

Examples of indeterminate tomatoes are Better Boy, Beefmaster, most "cherry" types, Early Girl, most heirloom varieties, etc.

3. **SEMI-INDETERMINATE** is another growth categories, but some varieties of these tomatoes have been around for many years, "**half bush and half vine**" between the two above. The semi-determinate tomatoes are typical determinate types except in the length of the branches, the distance between leaf section is longer. They will grow larger than determinate varieties, but are not as rampant as indeterminate ones. They are best grown with 3-4 main stems and typically grow 4 to 6 feet tall. They should be staked, but are less likely to outgrow their stakes than indeterminate types. They will produce a main crop that ripens together, but will also continue to produce up until frost. Examples of semi-indeterminate tomatoes are Celebrity, Valley Cat, Mountain Spring and Mountain Pride.

4. **COMPACT INDETERMINATE** or **INDETERMINATE SHORT-INTERNODES (ISI)** is the last group of growth category tomatoes. A newly developed type of tomato that combines the controlled growth of a "determinate" with the continual production potential of an "indeterminate." Some to many of these varieties have wrinkled-rugose leaves, tomato plant leaves that look like a potato's foliage, it's O.K., that's expected! Varieties include: Better Bush, Super Bush, Bush Goliath, Bush Champion, Burpee Golden Dwarf Champion, Beefy Boy, Bush Early Girl, Husky Red and Gold, and Moneymaker

Oh, one other category: Dwarf or Compact Determinate. Will leave this newest group for discussion at a future date!

<http://dwarftomatoproject.net/History.php>

<http://www.tomatoville.com> http://tatianastomatobase.com/wiki/Main_Page

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