

Growing Tomatoes at Altitude!

Successful strategies for Zone 4b
Jackson Hole, Wyoming



UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

Extension
Teton County

master
gardener

Barb Sands

UWYO Master Gardener



Welcome to Growing Tomatoes at Altitude!

WHO ARE WE?

Master Gardeners are trained volunteers of the University of Wyoming Extension — bringing research-based gardening education to communities across Wyoming.

WHAT'S TODAY'S FOCUS?

We have begun a monthly public outreach series to help local gardeners succeed.
Today: tips for growing tomatoes from seed and seedlings in Wyoming's challenging climate!

What is Your USDA Hardiness Zone?

...and why does it matter?!

Understanding your zone is the first step to gardening success!

Zone 4B: Our Cold, Beautiful Reality

We live and grow in one of the **COLDEST** areas in Wyoming.

The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map helps us choose the best time to set out plants based on average extreme minimum winter temperatures.

Zone maps are available online by zip code at www.plantmaps.com

❄ Average Last Frost Date

Jackson Hole

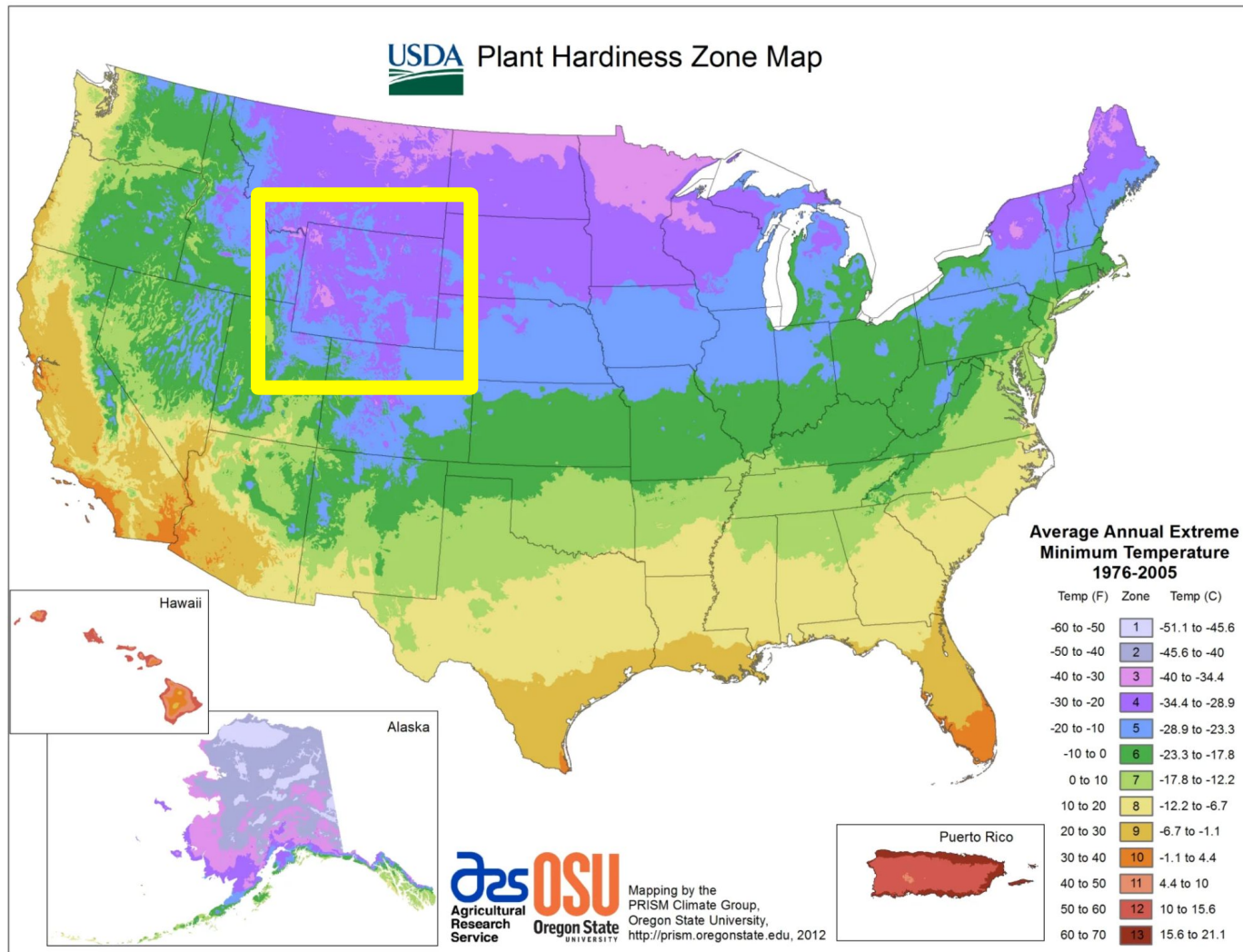
June 21–30

Plan your planting around this date!



USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 4B

Zone 4B covers
much of Wyoming
— average
minimum temps of
-20°F to -25°F





Tips for Successful Tomato Growing!



Choose Early Varieties

Select short-season tomatoes (<70 days to maturity)



Find Your Sun Spot

Garden plot, container, or balcony? Follow the heat!



Plant Deeply

Snip lowest leaves; tomatoes root along the buried stem



Pinch & Prune

Don't be afraid to trim! It boosts fruit production



Feed Your Soil

Organic fertilizer & compost = great tasting tomatoes!



Water the Rootball

Deep, consistent watering at the root zone is key



Support Your Plants

Stakes, trellis, or cages — plan ahead for big plants



Pick Wisely

Read seed labels carefully for your specific needs



Choose Short Season Varieties

Look for varieties under 70 days to maturity

- Jaune Flamme
- Gardener's Delight
- Golden Mama
- Early Girl
- Fourth of July
- Siberian
- Stupice



Reading Seed Packets — What to Look For

Rainbow Blend

Solanum lycopersicum

\$2.99
100 mg

FROST SENSITIVE
55–90 DAYS from
transplanting

after last chance
of spring frost
DETERMINATE &
INDETERMINATE TYPES

A beautiful
mix of cherry
tomatoes in
a rainbow of
colors and
flavors! Not
typically found
in stores. A
super value,
seven varieties
in one packet!



TOMATO Rainbow Blend



Seedling

Days to Emerge:
5 – 10 Days

Seed Depth:
1/8"

Seed Spacing:
A group of 3 seeds
every 24" – 36"

Row Spacing:
36"

Thinning:
When 2" tall, thin
to 1 every 24" – 36"

Maturity:
55 – 90 Days
from transplanting

te Seed Sown

A unique combination of distinctively different cherry tomatoes! Includes color-coded seeds for identification. 'Sundrop' indeterminate, orange tomato; 'Gold Nugget' determinate, yellow tomato; 'Chocolate Cherry' indeterminate, brown tomato; 'Sweetie' indeterminate, red tomato; 'Green Grape' determinate, green tomato; 'Super Snow White' indeterminate, white tomato; and 'Bicolor Cherry' indeterminate, pink/white striped tomato. Provide support for vigorous vines that easily reach 6'. *This packet yields approximately 60 plants when started indoors.*

When to sow outside: For mild climates only: 1 to 2 weeks after your average last frost date, and when soil temperature is at least 60°F.

When to start inside: RECOMMENDED. 4 to 6 weeks before transplanting. Transplant when air temperature is 45°F or warmer, usually 1 to 2 weeks after your last average frost date. Ideal soil temperature for germination is 70°–90°F.

**OPEN POLLINATED
AND
UNTREATED**



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660 Compton Street, Brookfield, Colorado 80422

More Tips for a Successful Harvest

1



Read Those Seed Labels!

Carefully read commercial seed labels. What matters to you? Days to maturity, disease resistance, container suitability?

2



Watch Daily for Changes

Check your plants every day — look for hornworm droppings, leaves that need pinching, or early signs of problems.

3



When is Your Tomato Ripe?

Color change, slight give when squeezed, easy separation from the vine — trust your senses!

4



Up Next: Container Growing!

Great news — you can absolutely grow delicious tomatoes in containers. Coming up next!



Watch Out for These Caterpillars!

Manduca quinquemaculata

► The Tomato Hornworm

Major pest and voracious eater.

► Hard to Spot!

They camouflage extremely well — look for droppings first.

► Fast Damage

Can consume ALL leaves within just a few days.

► What to Do

Hand-pick them off or use Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*).





Growing in Containers — Absolutely Yes!



✓ Perfect for Balconies

Limited space? No problem! Containers work beautifully on decks and patios.

✓ Go BIG on Pot Size

Use at least 15" x 15" — large wine barrels are perfect. Tiny pots = sad plants.

✓ Drainage is a Must

Choose containers with good drainage holes and great drainage soil.

✓ Pick the Right Variety

Choose stocky, compact varieties bred for container growing.

Container Growing: The Details

Just ONE Plant Per Container!

Watering

Soak the rootball during heat; water regularly. Drainage holes are ESSENTIAL.

Fertilizing

Container growing washes out nutrients fast. Fertilize every 10–14 days.

Temperature

Mulch to keep roots cool. Don't let containers overheat in sun.

Support

Even compact plants need a stake or small cage in a container.





Meet the Growers!



Thousands of Varieties to Choose From!



Explore local nurseries and seed libraries for varieties that thrive in Zone 4B!

Many Choices: Understanding Seed Types

Organic

Produced naturally; same crop year to year. Certified organic means no chemicals. You CAN save these seeds!

GMO

Created in a lab; may include pesticides in genetic profile. Cannot save seeds. Most seed libraries don't accept them.

Heirloom

Produced by open pollination via bees, birds & wind. Prized for flavor and history. Save seeds freely!

Hybrid

Bred for disease resistance & uniformity. May produce different tomatoes next year. Cannot reliably save seeds.

Open-Pollinated

Pollinated naturally by birds, bees, and wind. Consistent from year to year. Seeds can be saved!

So What's the Difference?

DETERMINATE

Compact & Bushy

- ✓ All fruit ripens at the SAME time
- ✓ Great for small spaces
- ✓ Minimal staking needed
- ✓ Perfect for canning batches

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S

INDETERMINATE

Grows Like a Weed!

- ✓ Continuous fruit all season long
- ✓ Needs staking or a strong cage
- ✓ Great for fresh eating all summer
- ✓ Keeps growing — can get huge!

Can You Tell Which is Indeterminate?



Plant A



Plant B

Let's Grow Tomatoes!

Start Seeds **EARLY**

Begin indoors in February or March — before your last frost date.

Harden Off **Gradually**

Move seedlings outside slowly over 1–2 weeks to adjust to outdoor temps.

Watch Your Frost Dates

Jackson Hole last frost: June 21–30. Don't rush it!

Consider Protection

Row covers, cold frames, and walls-of-water extend your growing season.



Today's Takeaway

Inform, grow, watch, and keep trying for that special tomato!

Every season you learn something new. Wyoming's climate is challenging — but the tomatoes are SO worth it!





Thanks for Joining Us Today!

Happy growing, Jackson Hole!



Extension
Teton County



Coming Up Next!



**May 7th at 5:30
PM**



Prepping Your Garden for Planting

Presented by:

Janetta Teichert

UW Master Gardener

Teton County Extension Office
4H Building, 255 W. Deloney Avenue