Soil Test Information Sheet No. V-440

Prepared by Extension Horticulturist James Boudreaux and modified by Research Coordinator Christine Coker

Tomatoes

1. Tomatoes are sensitive to strongly acid soils and production may be limited if soil pH is below 5.0. If soil pH is below 5.5, apply agricultural limestone. If magnesium is low, apply dolomitic limestone. Apply lime 2-6 months before transplanting.

2. Apply 40 to 50 pounds of nitrogen per acre and all phosphorus and potassium prior to planting. Sidedress with 30 to 50 pounds of nitrogen per acre when fruit on first cluster are marble sized. A second sidedressing of 30 to 50 pounds of nitrogen per acre should be applied when fruit on third cluster are marble sized. Calcium nitrate can be used as a source of sidedress nitrogen to supply calcium in addition to nitrogen.

3. Soils with deep sandy topsoil in the hill areas may need a sidedressing of 60-100 pounds per acre of potassium as well as nitrogen.

4. Blossom end rot can result from excess nitrogen, moisture stress, low soil calcium levels or a combination of these factors.

5. Use the higher rates of nitrogen for a summer “heat set” tomato crop. This will help to develop better foliage and prevent sunburning.

6. Tomatoes grown with drip irrigation can be sidedressed by injecting nitrogen fertilizer with the irrigation water. This process is called fertigation. Inject 10-12 pound of nitrogen per acre per week. Start fertigation 2-4 weeks after planting and continue for 12 to 14 weeks.

7. Contact your county agent for additional information and help in your fertilization program. The agent also receives a copy of this report for the parish office files.

Revised 7/2025