

## Agriculturally Speaking

By RUSSELL C. KING  
County Extension Director



Tomato plants have two general growth habits. To space and train them properly, it is important to know what type of plants you have.

### Indeterminate Tomato Plants

Indeterminate varieties of tomato plants are tall-growing plants, normally ranging in height from five to eight feet, which produce a fruit cluster on their stems between every third leaf. Plant terminals continue to grow as long as the plant is healthy. Most of our home garden varieties in North Carolina belong to this group. Some of the varieties are: Manapal, Better Boy, Big Boy, Fantastic and Cherokee.

Indeterminate types produce a shoot or "sucker" at each leaf axil. These suckers, if left undisturbed, grow into larger stems and produce fruit. The plant is usually supported above ground with a stake or trellis. A five-to-seven-foot stake may be driven into the ground and the stems should be tied loosely to the stake with soft twine or cloth. Trellised tomatoes may be handled in a similar manner, leaving one stem for each eight-to-12 inches of space in the row. For example, if the plants are spaced three feet apart, leave three stems per plant. If plants are spaced two feet apart, leave two stems per plant. Break out all other suckers before they become three inches in length.

### Determinate Tomato Plants

Determinate varieties of tomato plants are shorter-growing plants, normally growing one-and-one-half to five feet tall and producing a fruit cluster on stems between each leaf. Because each stem terminates in a fruit cluster, determinate types are often called "self-pruning." Some varieties in this group are Pik Red, Patio, Duke, Mountain Pride and Sunny.

Determinate types are usually pruned only once. They are normally spaced one-and-one-half to two feet apart in the row. Determinate plants are sometimes tied to a stake, but more often, the plants are supported in a weave of strings. This weaving system may be developed by placing stakes between every other plant, along with two stakes placed side-by-side at each end of a section. Sections are usually about 100 feet in length. This break provides a path to carry fruit out of the field. When plants are about 12 inches tall, the first string is tied to the stalks at one end of a section. Then, pulling the string as tightly as possible, the cord is wrapped around each stake, making sure to keep in tight. (This procedure takes practice.) The string should be stretched down one side of the row and then back up the other. When one has returned to the starting point, the string is tied again. A second string is added in a week or two, when the tops are eight-to-10 inches above the first string, but before the plants begin to flop over. Usually, only four strings are needed to support a crop. Many persons use a 12- to 36-inch stick with a hole at its end to guide the string around the stakes. Usually, nylon "baler's string" is used, since it does not stretch like "binder's twine."

### Caging Tomato Plants

Occasionally, wire cages are used to support tomato plants. A cylinder, about two feet in diameter and three-to-five feet high, is made from strong hog fence or wire which is used for reinforcing concrete. The cylinder is placed over the plant and anchored to the ground. Plants growing in cylinders are normally spaced three-to-four feet apart in the row and are not pruned. Instead, the suckers are pushed back into the cage to force them to grow upward. This is a good system to use, if only a small number of plants can be grown because the per-plant-yield is generally higher than from other systems of training.

## Livestock Theft Charges Drawn

Two area men have been scheduled to appear today in Warren County District Court before Judge Larry Senter, of Oxford, to answer to felony-grade charges of larceny of livestock valued at nearly \$2,000.

Robert Lee Pitchford, 21, of Henderson, and Redmond Keith Taylor, 19, whose recorded addresses are in both Warrenton and Henderson, were arrested following investigations of the alleged theft of 37 pigs valued at \$1,850 from Dorsey Capps, of Norlina.

Pitchford was arrested on Jan. 23 and placed under \$2,500 bond. He has also been charged with breaking and entering and/or larceny in the Capps matter, and, in an unrelated matter, will answer to charges of disposal of secured personal property.

Taylor was arrested on March 24 and was confined in the Warren County Jail under a \$500 bond.

According to literature prepared by UNC's Institute of Government, larceny of horses, mules, swine or cattle is a Class H felony, punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years, a fine of not less than the amount of loss or damages, or both.

## Local Merchants To Have Dinner

The Warrenton Merchants' Association will hold their annual dinner meeting Thursday, March 30 at The Rafters, downstairs.

The reception will begin at 6:30 p.m., with dinner following at 7:30 p.m.

All merchants have been notified and are invited to attend.

## Warrenton Girl Baptized Easter

Jan Boyd Harris, 9, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James C. Harris, Jr., of Warrenton, was baptized Easter Sunday at Warrenton Baptist Church by the Rev. Ed Beddingfield.

Jan is the granddaughter of James C. Harris, Sr. of Inez and the late Frances Reams Harris, and of Mrs. Florence W. Joyner of Rocky Mount and the late W. Donley Joyner.

## Lawn & Garden Show March 30th, 31st & April 1st

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