

Tomato

Harvesting

Depending on the variety, fruits become ready for first picking in about 60-70 days after transplanting. The stage of harvesting depends upon the purpose to which the fruits are to be used. The different stages of harvesting are as follows-

1. **Dark green colour-** Dark green colour is changed and a reddish pink shade is observed on fruit. Fruits to be shipped are harvested at this stage. Such fruits are then sprayed with ethylene 48 hours prior to shipping. Immature green tomatoes will ripen poorly and be of low quality. A simple way to determine maturity is to slice the tomato with a sharp knife. If seeds are cut, the fruit is too immature for harvest and will not ripen properly.
2. **Breaker stage-** Dim pink colour observed on $\frac{1}{4}$ part of the fruit. Fruits are harvested at this stage to ensure the best quality. Such fruit are less prone to damage during shipment often fetch a higher price than less mature tomatoes.
3. **Pink stage-** Pink colour observed on $\frac{3}{4}$ part of the fruit.
4. **Reddish pink-** Fruits are stiff and nearly whole fruit turns reddish pink. Fruits for local sale are harvested at this stage.
5. **Fully riped-** Fruits are fully riped and soft having dark red colour. Such fruits are used for processing.

Fruits are normally harvested early in the morning or evening. The fruits are harvested by twisting motion of hand to separate fruits from the stem. Harvested fruits should be kept only in basket or crates and keep it in shade. Since all the fruits do not mature at the same time, they are harvested at an interval of 4 days. Generally there will be 7-11 harvests in a crop life span.

Yield

The yield per hectare varies greatly according to variety and season. On an average, the yield varies from 20-25 t/ha. Hybrid varieties may yield upto 50-60 t/ha.