



You're walking through your beautiful tomato plants and notice this...



Your plants have missing leaves and the stems look cropped off.



There's little brown/black droppings on the leaves.

### What is doing this?

If you guessed a **Tomato Hornworm** you would be correct. This garden pest, if left alone, will destroy your tomato plants in no time at all.

- Tomato hornworms are very large caterpillars with a horn-like tail.
- Their favorite plant is tomato.
- Hornworms chew leaves and can completely eat all the leaves from a plant.
- They can also chew holes in tomatoes.



When I say these worms are large, I mean they are large! You'll wonder how you ever over looked this beast. Hornworms are among the largest caterpillars in Kentucky and can measure up to four inches in length. Regardless of their size they can be easily missed when walking your garden. Hornworms will often hide beneath the branches of the tomato plant as pictured above.

### BUT WAIT!

If you find a tomato hornworm with white oblong things on it, leave it! These white things are the cocoons of a parasitic wasp that kills hornworms. A female wasp has laid her eggs under the skin of the hornworm. As the eggs hatch the larvae feed on the hornworm's insides. The larvae will then eat their way out of the caterpillar and spin the cocoons you see. Eventually adult wasps will emerge from the cocoons and the weakened hornworm will die.



### Sphinx Moth

The adult form of the tomato hornworm is a relatively large, robust-bodied moth, commonly known as a hawk moth or sphinx moth. The adult moth feeds on the nectar of various flowers and, like the larval form, is most active from dusk until dawn.

If you're wondering what kind of pest is creeping around on your plants, just call and I will be happy to help you find out. - Michelle



## Let's Talk Tomatoes!

Tomatoes are one of our favorite garden vegetables and one of the most anticipated in the summer garden. It's hard to beat a good, garden tomato sandwich! When getting ready to grow tomatoes we have to decide what we want from those tomato plants. The first thing to decide is whether or not we want determinate or indeterminate varieties.

### What is the difference between Determinate and Indeterminate tomatoes?

**Determinate** tomato plants are shorter than indeterminate plants. They can be staked, caged, or trellised, and need to be pruned only once. The harvest period is shorter compared to indeterminate types. You will harvest more tomatoes over a shorter period of time compared to indeterminate types.


Some varieties of determinate tomatoes are:

- Celebrity
- Mountain Fresh
- Carolina Gold (golden yellow)
- Plum Dandy (paste)
- Terenzo (cherry)

**Indeterminate** tomato plants must be trellised in order to stay upright. Pruning lower suckers (side branches) as the plants grow taller is recommended. Tomato harvest continues throughout the summer season as the plant grows.

Some varieties of indeterminate tomatoes are:

- Better Boy
- Beefsteak (large fruit)
- Early Girl
- Juliet (grape)
- Jolly (pear shaped)
- Supersweet 100 (cherry)
- Sungold (golden yellow cherry)
- Cherokee Purple (heirloom, dark purple)
- Brandywine (heirloom, red, pink, and yellow types)

 If you have any questions about growing better tomatoes, please contact me!



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