

Benton's book an indispensable aid to tomato lovers

By Tom Alexander

Almost everyone grows tomatoes.

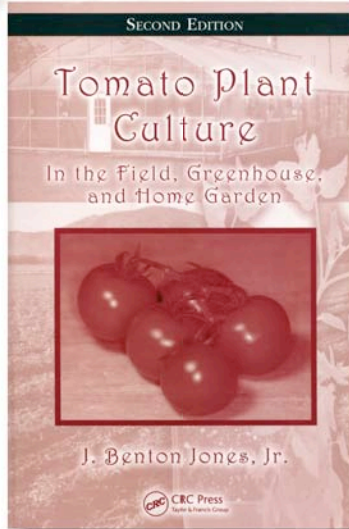
Tomatoes are one of the most widely produced plants in hydroponics and soil production by both commercial growers and hobby home growers. It only makes sense then, that tomatoes have many more books published on how to grow them than other vegetables.

The second edition of "Tomato Plant Culture in the Field, Greenhouse and Home Garden" by J. Benton Jones is a veritable 400-page encyclopedia on how to grow this popular vegetable. This is an updated version of his first tomato book, published in 1999, with each chapter containing new material and information.

The first chapter has a lighthearted look at tomato history and trivia before delving into the hard core needs of tomato plants in producing a bountiful harvest.

The rest of the eight chapters cover everything you need to know to harvest the red (and many other colors) globe in different sizes and shapes. As I write this, it is the peak of the tomato harvest season outdoors and I am sure many tomato growers could have used the information in this book to produce better tomatoes.

At this writing I am growing more than 100 plants in my garden, and in one area of my garden I have blossom end rot (BER) on some of the tomatoes. I quickly found the page that explained that "BER has several causes, the most commonly being a calcium deficiency coupled with moisture stress, which is probably the triggering mechanism ... When the dry weight calcium content of the fruit is 0.12% BER does not occur, but



when it is 0.08%, BER does occur." I haven't applied lime (calcium) to the soil in over ten years and water is a problem on some days. This fall I will apply some lime to the area where I plan to plant tomatoes next year. I will also try to apply more irrigation on a regular basis next year.

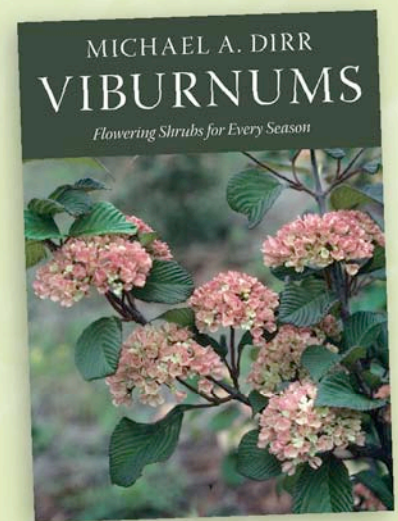
There are many pages on tomato greenhouse production using various hydroponic methods including ebb and flow, nutrient film technique, rockwool and perlite bags with drip irrigation, and aeroponics.

The book comes with a CD-ROM that has color photographs that are mentioned and referenced in the book.

Overall, this is one of the best books on how to grow tomatoes successfully. I highly recommend it to all who enjoy growing this delicious vegetable; or is it a fruit? There are 36 references and explanations in various pages regarding the fruit of the tomato plant. Whatever it is, this book will help you grow the best tomato. 🍅

Tom Alexander is publisher of The Growing Edge.

NEW from
horticultural
legend
**MICHAEL
A. DIRR:**



VIBURNUMS
*Flowering Shrubs
for Every Season*

hardcover, 264 pp
424 color photos, 7 color plates
\$39.95

**A viburnum exists for
virtually every garden.**

TIMBER PRESS
The Best in Gardening Books

800-327-5680
orders@timberpress.com
www.timberpress.com