

PAMPHLET No. 22.

**DOMINION OF CANADA.
CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM.**

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**TOMATO CULTURE. MUSHROOM CULTURE.
FORCING RHUBARB IN WINTER.**

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The chief aim in growing tomatoes for the general market or for home use is to have early fruit. The profits from early tomatoes are much greater than from later ones. This being the case, it is desirable to have the plants well advanced when they are set out in the open. To have them well advanced it is necessary to start them early. In southwestern Ontario seed is sown in greenhouses during the month of February. In colder district the time extends to April, but it is sown in most places during the month of March. From nine to ten weeks should be allowed from the time of sowing until planting out, the plants not being set out until danger of frost is past. When the seed is started very early in greenhouses and transplanted several times, it is three months or more from time of sowing until time of planting out.

Every grower of tomatoes should grow his own seed. By careful selection from individual plants from year to year, the variety may be much improved from the standpoint of earliness, uniformity and productiveness. If home-grown seed be not used it should be obtained from reliable seedsmen who are known to have good strains.

The seed is sown in rich, loamy soil. If started in the greenhouse, it is usually sown in boxes or flats containing three to four inches of soil. There should be thorough drainage in the boxes, obtained by boring holes in the bottom. If seeds are planted in the dwelling house, boxes or pots also are used. When sown in a hot-bed the seeds are usually sown thickly, in rows about four inches apart. The seed is planted from one-quarter to one-half an inch deep and after covering with soil the latter is pressed down with the hand to firm it. The soil should be kept moist, but not wet. As soon as the rough leaves appear, the little plants are pinched out about two inches apart each way into other flats or hot-beds. When grown for very early fruit they are again transplanted, when they have filled the space between them, to about four inches apart each way. A final transplanting is made to about six inches apart each way in hot-beds or cold frames, or they are planted in four to six inch pots and given plenty of room to develop. When grown in the hot-bed they should be transplanted at least twice. Strawberry boxes have been found very satisfactory to put the plants in at the final transplanting. What should be kept in mind and aimed at is the production of a stocky, sturdy plant which will have some fruit set upon it when it is planted in the field. A larger crop of early fruit can be obtained by pinching off the top of the plant after it has about six good leaves, which will result in later, but developing at the axils of the six leaves which are left on. These axillary shoots will each bear flowers if the plants be given sufficient room, and, if far enough advanced when set out, it may be readily seen that the crop of early fruit will be much larger than from the terminal shoot. To obtain the first ripe fruits as early as on the unpruned plants, the seed should be sown about three weeks earlier. Plants which have been pinched back should