

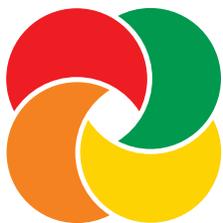


Add Fresh Flavour  
and Colour to your Menu



# ONTARIO GREENHOUSE VEGETABLES

*From  
our house  
to yours...*



ONTARIO  
GREENHOUSE  
VEGETABLE GROWERS

OGVG.COM

## FOODSERVICE OPERATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

- Why Greenhouse?
- Tomatoes, Bell Peppers & Cucumbers
- Optimizing Shelf Life & Prep Tips
- Culinary Applications





# WHY GREENHOUSE?

*From our house to yours...*

## FRESH AND AVAILABLE

Vine ripened, hand-picked and available almost year-round.

## RELIABLE

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) farmers undergo annual third-party food safety audits to ensure their greenhouses comply with food safety standards.

## CONSISTENT SIZE & QUALITY

Our controlled greenhouse environment enables us to grow a uniform product that minimizes waste and maximizes yield and quality.

## NATURE AT WORK

OGVG farmers practice Integrated Pest Management, using good bugs to eat the bad bugs. Our farmers also utilize bumblebees to pollinate our tomatoes and peppers.



## TASTE THE DIFFERENCE

*Fresh & Vine Ripened makes...*

# Greenhouse Tomato Varieties & Applications

Our sweetness level ranges from 1-5, where 1 is less sweet and 5 is very sweet.

## Seasonality March through November

### BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES

- Known for their firm "meaty" texture
- Light-red colour
- Thicker skin
- Not quite as sweet as the other varieties
- Luscious, tasty, incredible flavour
- Yellow and orange varieties are low in acidity and better for anyone with acid-reflux



Sweetness Level: 1 

**APPLICATION:** perfect for slicing and adding to sandwiches or char-broiled burgers; great for stuffing

### CLUSTER TOMATOES (Tomatoes on the Vine)

- Harvested with the vine, which keeps their firm texture and provides additional flavour
- Sweet and tart at the same time
- Also available in yellow and orange



Sweetness Level: 2 

**APPLICATION:** use for salads, salsas and all of your favourite side dishes

### ROMA TOMATOES

Once considered the Italian cooking tomato and the choice of chefs, roma tomatoes have become extremely popular and multifunctional.

- Oval shape
- Thin skin
- Firm flesh
- Few seeds
- Low acidity
- Available in large or mini size
- Rich in colour
- Deep in flavour



Sweetness Level: 3 

**APPLICATION:** perfect for sauces, soups, salsas, and canning; great addition to salads



Sweetness Level: 3 🍅🍅🍅

### HEIRLOOM TOMATOES

- Found in a variety of shapes, colours and sizes
- Provides unique shapes and impressive colours to the plate
- Perfect blend of sweetness and acidity
- Full of flavour
- Each variety tastes different, so be sure to try them all

**APPLICATION:** excellent addition to salads and pastas



Sweetness Level: 4 🍅🍅🍅🍅

### COCKTAIL TOMATOES

- Juicy
- High sugar level, sweet and succulent
- Low acidity
- Deep red
- Variety of colours and flavours
- Larger than a cherry tomato but smaller and rounder than a Roma tomato
- Often sold as on the vine

**APPLICATION:** favourite for an on-the-go snack, in salads, roasted and tossed in pastas or used on kabobs



Sweetness Level: 5 🍅🍅🍅🍅🍅

### CHERRY AND GRAPE TOMATOES

- Perfect bite-sized snacks
- Small, ripe and sweet
- Yellow and orange varieties especially low in acidity

**APPLICATION:** enjoy them on their own, in a salad, on a veggie tray or on a pizza; great for on-the-go snacking or kids meals

## GREENHOUSE TOMATOES *Optimizing Performance*

### BUYING

- To identify our tomatoes, look for a sticker that indicates Ontario or Canadian origin
- Greenhouse tomatoes should arrive in good condition; ripe and firm with minimal defects or decay – free of surface cracks and bruises; minimal dirt or dust; bright colour
- Size will vary by variety with grape/cherry tomatoes being the smallest, followed by cocktail tomatoes, romas, cluster and then heirloom and beefsteak
- Tomatoes of one particular variety should be similar in size
- Flavour profile varies by variety with the smaller ones generally sweeter. Our sweetness level ranges from 1-5, where 1 is less sweet and 5 is very sweet
- The red varieties of greenhouse tomatoes are bright red when ripe
- A fine star-shaped marking on the bottom of a greenhouse tomato will tell you that the tomato has already begun its final ripening process and is a good one to select

### RECEIVING TIPS

#### HOW TO KEEP YOUR TOMATOES RIPE

Verify that the condition, colour and size of tomatoes received are consistent with what you ordered. Look for bright shiny skins and firm flesh, regardless of the degree of colour/ripeness.

**APPEARANCE:** The tomato should look red all around (for red varieties) or one colour all round for the other colours.

**TOUCH:** The tomato should feel firm, but not hard-as-a-rock firm.

**SMELL:** When you take a whiff of our tomatoes' thick, green vine or calyx, a garden fresh scent equals a fresh tomato.



### MAINTAINING OPTIMAL QUALITY

Our tomatoes come to you firm and ripe. Here's how to keep them fresh and tasty for longer.

**AVOID THE FRIDGE:** Tomatoes like comfortable temperatures. The refrigerator's cooler temperature causes them to become soft and mealy, lose their great flavour and texture, and considerably shorten their shelf life. Store greenhouse tomatoes at a cool room temperature out of direct sunlight.

**EXCEPTION:** *Finished fresh cut tomato products must be stored at refrigerated temperatures not to exceed 41° F (5°C) and used ideally on the day they are cut.*

**SHELF LIFE:** Keep away from bananas, apples, or pears which could cause your tomatoes to ripen faster & shorten shelf life.

## TOMATO *Preparation Tips*

Before using any variety of tomatoes, wash them gently in cool water and dry.

### SLICING

A good serrated knife is far superior to a flat-edged knife when it comes to slicing tomatoes. If you use a flat-edged knife, make sure it's very sharp, or you'll squash and bruise the tomato when slicing.

Before slicing, core the tomato using a sharp paring knife by making several angled cuts through the stem and under the core.

Lay the tomato on its side and cut a very thin slice off both ends and discard or use in soup. Slice the tomato to desired thickness.

Large quantities can be sliced on a meat slicer or a very sharp mandolin.



### TOMATO CONCASSÉ

When tomatoes are peeled, seeded and chopped the result is known as tomato concassé. We do this because tomato seeds can taste bitter and the skin can be tough and hard to digest, especially when the tomatoes are very fresh. When we're done, we're going to end up with diced, skinless, seedless tomatoes, which you can then use in sauces, salads, omelettes or any other recipe. The finished product is the equivalent of canned diced tomatoes, only much fresher. Make only enough to last through a single service period. Once peeled and chopped, tomatoes begin to lose their flavour and texture. Follow the steps below for peeling and seeding.



### PEELING

To eliminate the skin for cooked dishes, first cut an "X" through the tomato skin at the bottom of the tomato. Immerse them briefly in boiling water -- 10 to 30 seconds -- then in ice water, then drain over a sieve and peel immediately. Skin should easily peel off.



### SEEDING

Halve tomato crosswise with a sharp serrated knife, then gently squeeze each half and allow the seeds to drip out. Using a rounded spoon handle, scoop out any remaining seeds. To save the juice, seed over a sieve set above a bowl. Discard the seeds.

Once the peel and seeds have been removed, the tomato can be cut into dice or chopped into concassé of an appropriate size.



### STUFFING TOMATOES

Lay the tomato on its side and cut a very thin slice off the bottom using a sharp serrated knife. Slice off the top ¼ of the tomato and discard (or use for another purpose). Using a sharp paring knife and spoon, cut and scoop out the flesh leaving thickish walls. Salt the cavities lightly and invert on a cooling rack for 15 minutes to drain before stuffing.



## PERFORMANCE *Tips*

### HOW TO AVOID WASTE

As you trim, peel and seed tomatoes, don't forget to keep any usable trimmings such as the top and bottom slice – the flesh can be cut off and used in casseroles, soups or salsa. Drained juice can be part of a vegetable stock or soup.

### ALUMINUM IS A NO-NO

Tomatoes and aluminum don't play nice. The acid in the tomato reacts unfavourably to aluminum pots, pans or utensils. Using aluminum makes the cooked tomatoes bitter and fades the colour. The acid in the tomatoes may also discolour the aluminum cookware. You're best off using a nonreactive pan, such as stainless steel, enamel coated or glass.

### FLAVOUR SAVERS

When making tomato sauce, a quarter teaspoon of baking soda per gallon will help alleviate acidity.

### HERBS, A TOMATO'S BEST FRIEND

There are a lot of great herbs out there that complement tomatoes, but so far these are our favourites: basil, oregano, cilantro, marjoram, pepper, dill weed, thyme, garlic, bay leaf, celery seed, sesame seed, tarragon, chives and parsley.



'Twisted' Indian Masala Bruschetta  
Go to [www.OGVG.com](http://www.OGVG.com) for recipe.

### YIELD

- 1 medium tomato, seeded, yields approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped
- 1 large tomato, seeded, yields 1 cup chopped
- 1 lb (454 g) tomatoes yields approximately 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups chopped or 2 cups puréed

## CULINARY *Applications*

### BEEFSTEAK, TOMATOES ON THE VINE, HEIRLOOM TOMATOES

Salads, sandwiches, stuffing or soup

### GRAPE AND CHERRY TOMATOES, COCKTAIL TOMATOES

Crudité platters, roasting, kabobs

### ROMA TOMATOES

In sauces, purees, soups, canning and other cooked dishes or also can be used in salads and cold applications

See the section on Tomato Varieties for more applications

### RECIPE IDEAS

- Bruschetta
- Greek Salad
- Caprese Skewers
- Insalata Caprese
- Fresh Salsa
- Tabbouleh
- Pizza topping and sauce
- Baked and stuffed
- Pasta toss
- Roasted tomato soup, etc.

### RECIPES FROM OUR WEBSITE

- Whole Baked Tomato
- Tomato Basil Soup
- Bruschetta
- Oven Dried Tomato Dip
- Tomato Cheese Strata
- Stuffed Tomatoes
- Spiced Up Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Pasta
- Greek Summer Salad
- OG Tomato Dip With Canadian Bacon
- Tomato Basil And Ricotta Risotto

## TOMATO *Nutrition*

Tomatoes are a good source of vitamin C and beta-carotene and a source of vitamin A, folacin and potassium. They also contain lycopene, an antioxidant that may help prevent some forms of cancer, heart disease and other diseases. Cooking tomatoes increases the effect of the lycopene.

Tomatoes on the Vine are known for their outstanding antioxidant content, are very high in vitamin C, vitamin K, vitamin A and potassium and are a good source of Iron.



Tomato Tart  
Go to [www.OGVG.com](http://www.OGVG.com) for recipe.

# Greenhouse Bell Peppers Varieties & Application

**Seasonality March through November**

## PEPPERS

- Our peppers come in stunning colours of red, yellow and orange
- As well as the full size varieties, mini peppers and long peppers are also available in the same great colours
- The sweet, crunchy taste and stunning colours of our peppers make these a chef's staple – a veritable culinary colour palette for the kitchen artist
- Used widely throughout the world in an astounding number of dishes – from raw to cooked
- Various pepper flavours & colours will add fresh value to any recipe



**APPLICATION:** ideal for adding colour to cooked dishes, they are great roasted in the oven or on the grill or simply eaten fresh. Mini peppers are excellent for stuffing or using with dips

## GREENHOUSE BELL PEPPERS *Optimizing Performance*

### BUYING AND STORING

- Look for greenhouse peppers that are smooth, firm and plump with thick shiny skins free of cracks or soft spots
- Keep peppers in a cool environment. The optimum temperature is 50-55 F or 10-12.7 C
- High temperatures can cause peppers to spoil and shrivel quickly, while cold temperatures can cause pitting
- Never wash peppers until ready to use



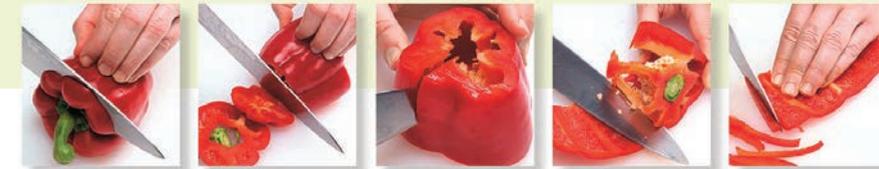
## PEPPER *Preparation Tips*

Rinse in cold water, core, seed and cut into strips or other shapes as required.

### CUTTING AND SEEDING FRESH PEPPERS

Cut through the peppers from top to bottom. Continue to cut into quarters, especially if the pepper is large. Using the tip of a paring knife, cut away the stem and seeds. This cut removes the least amount of usable pepper.

You can make very fine, even julienne or dice by filleting the pepper – that is removing the seeds and ribs before cutting it. Cut away the top and bottom of the pepper to create an even rectangle. Cut the flesh into neat julienne or dice. Reserve any edible scraps for use in coulis or to flavour broths or stews.



### ROASTING PEPPERS

Halve the peppers and remove the stems, seeds and ribs. Place cut side down on a foil lined sheet pan. Place the pan in a very hot oven or under the broiler. Roast or broil until evenly charred. Remove from the oven or broiler and cover immediately using the extra foil from the pan lining. Let stand for 30 minutes or so to steam the peppers and make the skin easier to remove. Use in appropriate recipes.



## CUTTING

1. With a sharp chef's knife, cut off the top of the pepper just below the shoulder so that you remove the entire stem end exposing the ribs inside the pepper.
2. Squarely cut off the narrow bottom. Reserve the trimmed ends. The pepper will now be shaped like a cylinder.
3. Set the pepper on one end and with the tip of your knife, make one neat vertical slice to open the cylinder.
4. Set the pepper skin side down and work the knife along the inside of the pepper (with the blade parallel to the work surface), removing the ribs and seeds while unrolling the pepper so that it lies flat.
5. You now have a neat rectangle of bell pepper that you can julienne or dice. You can trim and chop the reserved ends as well.



## HOW TO AVOID WASTE

As you trim, peel and seed peppers, don't forget to keep any usable trimmings such as the top and bottom slice – the flesh can be cut off and used in casseroles, soups or salsa.

## CULINARY Applications

Because greenhouse peppers are a premium product, savour the taste in simple dishes where you can enjoy the sweetness in every bite. Try them as pizza toppings, roasted or grilled in an antipasto platter, or as an omelette filling. Make a pepper salad, using the various colours and drizzle with olive oil and fresh herbs. They are also great in a stir fry, grilled or stuffed, or on their own. Great for a Romesco sauce or coulis.

## PEPPER Nutrition

Just one of our sweet bell peppers packs in 100% of your daily vitamin A, C and E requirements. They are also very high in dietary fibre.

## RECIPES FROM OUR WEBSITE

- Saffron Yellow Bell Pepper Soup
- Red Pepper Coulis
- Roasted Red Peppers
- Stuffed Peppers
- Roasted Red Pepper Hummus
- Village Salad and more

# Greenhouse Cucumbers Varieties & Applications

## Seasonality Year Round

### ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

- Our large seedless english cucumbers are wrapped in plastic to seal in their natural moisture and prolong shelf life
- Why go seedless? Easier to digest!
- Firm and crisp, with an unexpected burst of flavour, they have a vivid green edible skin. This means that there is no waste
- Cool, refreshing, fat-free and low in calories



**APPLICATION:** perfect for snacking, appetizers, meals or even in drinks. Add them to sandwiches and salads for a refreshing crunch, or blend them into soups

### MINI AND COCKTAIL CUCUMBERS

- Same attributes as our large cucumbers
- Crisper texture and taste experience



**APPLICATION:** a delicious snack for kids and adults - no preparation required; can also be used in the same way as the large cucumbers, minimal prep, side garnish for kids meals or on-the-go snacks



## GREENHOUSE CUCUMBERS *Optimizing Performance*

### BUYING AND STORING GUIDELINES

- Ripe Ontario greenhouse cucumbers should be long, thin and firm
- Look for cucumbers that are a deep, vivid green colour
- They should be blemish-free and heavy for their size
- Check to make sure there are no soft spots or blemishes, especially at the ends
- They are individually sealed in plastic to protect their delicate dark green exterior, to help retain their natural moisture and prolong shelf life
- Greenhouse cucumbers can be stored in their original plastic at cool room temperature or in the refrigerator at around 45° F (7° C) for up to 10 days
- Mini cucumbers can be kept in the refrigerator for up to two weeks in their original packaging or in plastic wrap
- Wrap any unused portions in plastic wrap to keep fresh
- Avoid storing cucumbers with fruits that produce the natural ripening agent ethylene such as apples, pears and bananas



### CUCUMBER PREPARATION TIPS

Greenhouse cucumbers don't need to be peeled (they are not waxed), and there are no seeds to remove.

Cucumbers are almost always eaten raw, by themselves, in salads or as a sandwich vegetable. Greenhouse cucumbers can be salted if desired.



### HOW TO AVOID WASTE

There is little waste with greenhouse cucumbers since there are no seeds and the skin is edible. However keep any small trimmings as you cut to your preferred shape and size; use in sauces such as tzaziki, raita or in chilled soups.

### CULINARY *Applications*

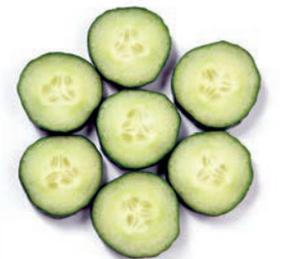
Use sliced in sandwiches, on crudité platters, in dips such as tzaziki and raita, in hot or cold soups e.g. gazpacho; cucumber cups can be stuffed with salad mixtures as an hors d'oeuvre; perfect in salads such as greek salad; pureed in smoothies; they are also delicious sautéed – try substituting in place of beets or zucchini – and so versatile that they complement a wide variety of cooking ingredients. They can be gently steeped in butter, stock or even cream, or cut in half, lengthwise, poached and filled with a savory mixture of rice and herbs.

### RECIPES FROM OUR WEBSITE

- Stuffed Cucumber
- Gazpacho
- Grape and Cucumber Gazpacho
- Cold Cucumber Soup
- Cucumber Mint Sauce
- Cucumber and Wasabi Salad

### CUCUMBER *Nutrition*

Cucumbers are very low in calories. They are very high in dietary fibre, vitamin A and vitamin C and are a good source of calcium and iron. The skin contains most of the nutrients so isn't it great that greenhouse cucumber skin is edible!



# Business Building Considerations

## PUT THE POWER OF ONTARIO FRESH PRODUCE ON YOUR MENU TODAY!

When you're developing ideas to differentiate your business and want to incorporate fresh, quality produce from Ontario greenhouses, consider what is influencing today's consumer.

What is influencing purchase & restaurant traffic:

- Higher quality & value
- Breakfast and snacking promotions
- Health & wellness increasingly a focus

## CUSTOMERS ARE LOOKING FOR VALUE THROUGH "BETTER FOR ME" FOODS WHICH CAN MEAN:

- Healthier menu options
- Vegetable-centric meal alternatives
- Sustainable food – feel good option
- Limited Time Offers (LTO's)
- Unique Combo Specials
- Food experiences & inspiration they can't easily prepare & duplicate at home

## WHY ONTARIO GREENHOUSE VEGETABLES MAKE \$ENSE ON YOUR MENU?

- Fresh = flavourful
- Vine Ripened = naturally ripened
- Consistent Quality = you can count on us
- Consistent Availability = we are always there for you
- Colourful = adds visual plate appeal
- Versatile = multiple menu applications
- Minimal Waste = 99% edible



*From our house to yours...*

**ONTARIO GREENHOUSE VEGETABLES, CULTIVATING  
BETTER VALUE FOR YOUR MONEY.**

Funding was  
provided by:



Possibility grows here.