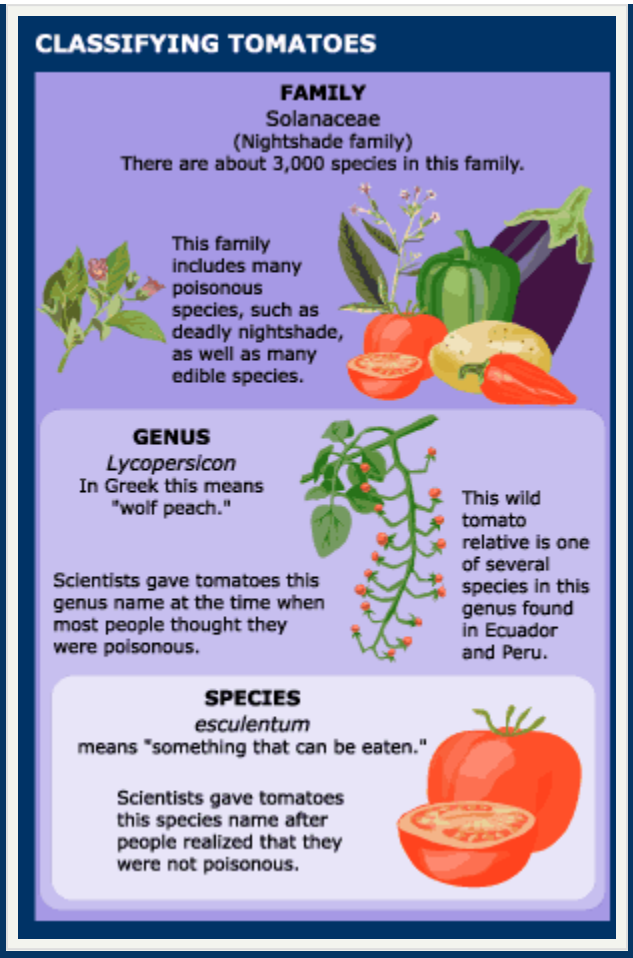
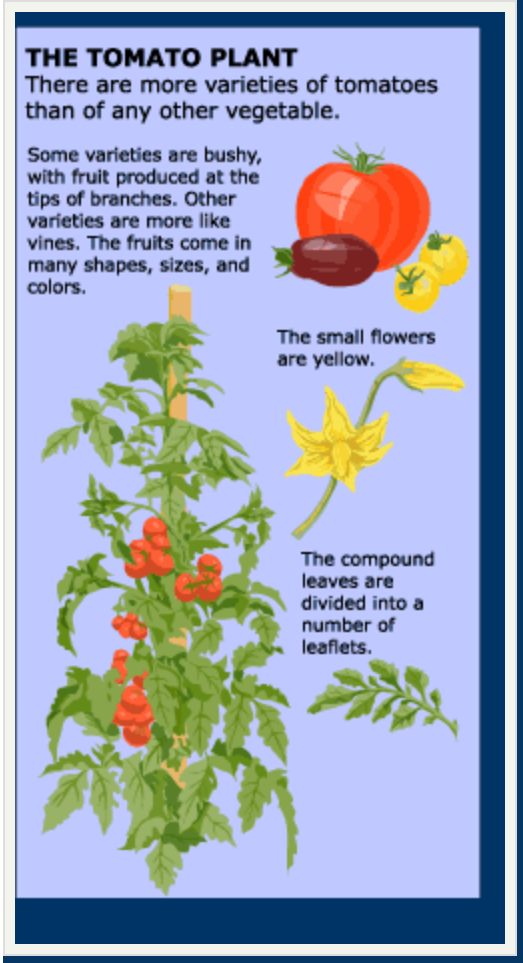
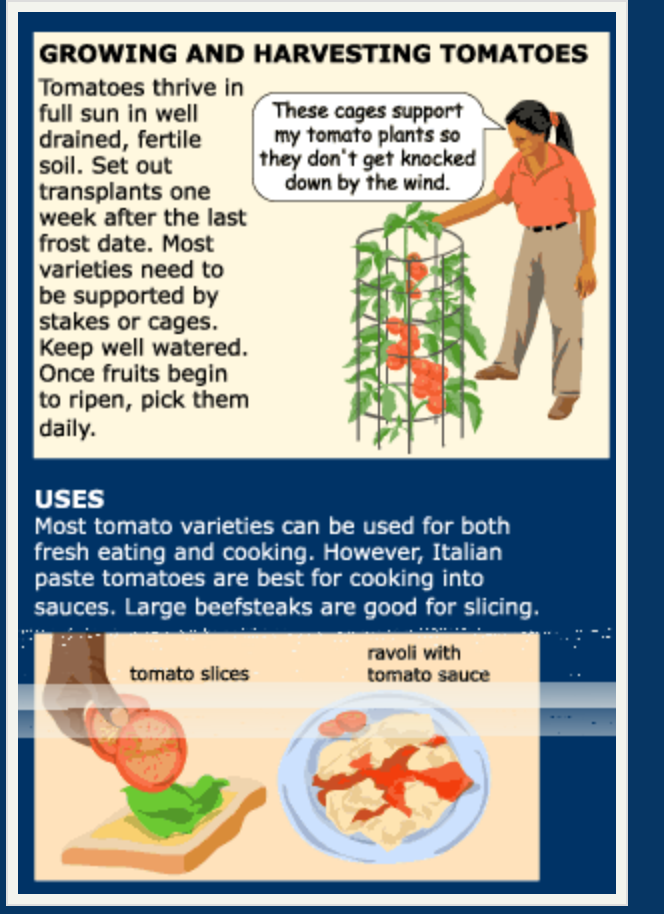
Tomatoes

DID YOU KNOW?
Spanish explorers brought tomato seeds to Europe in the early 1500's. At that time, most Europeans thought tomatoes were toxic, and would not even taste them. Italians were the first Europeans to use tomatoes as a key ingredient in their cooking.
ORIGINS
Tomatoes are native to the Andes Mountains in South America.
By the time the Spanish arrived in Mexico, the native Mexicans were growing and eating tomatoes. The name "tomato" comes from the Mexican word "tomatl."


CLASSIFYING TOMATOES
FAMILY
Solanaceae
(Nightshade family)
There are about 3,000 species in this family.
This family includes many poisonous species, such as deadly nightshade, as well as many edible species.
GENUS
Lycopersicon
In Greek this means "wolf peach."
Scientists gave tomatoes this genus name at the time when most people thought they were poisonous.
This wild tomato relative is one of several species in this genus found in Ecuador and Peru.
SPECIES
esculentum
means "something that can be eaten."
Scientists gave tomatoes this species name after people realized that they were not poisonous.





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