



Brandywine Tomato Problem Checklist

Your quick-reference guide for diagnosing and solving common issues

1. CRACKING (Radial or Concentric)

- ☐ **Symptom:** Fruit splits after rain or heavy watering
- ☐ Check soil moisture consistency (use drip irrigation or soaker hose)
- ☐ Apply 2-3 inches of mulch around base
- ☐ Pick tomatoes early (when blushing) if heavy rain forecast
- ☐ Reduce nitrogen fertilizer late in season

2. SLOW GROWTH / LATE RIPENING

- ☐ **Symptom:** Still green in August while other varieties are producing
- ☐ Start seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost
- ☐ Use black plastic mulch in spring to warm soil
- ☐ Ensure plant gets 8+ hours direct sunlight

3. BLOSSOM END ROT (BER)

- ☐ **Symptom:** Dark, leathery sunken patch on bottom of fruit
- ☐ Maintain consistent soil moisture with mulch
- ☐ Test soil pH (should be 6.2-6.8)
- ☐ Remove affected fruit to redirect plant energy

4. FRUIT DROP / FLOWER DROP

- ☐ **Symptom:** Flowers shrivel and fall off without forming fruit
- ☐ Check temperatures (ideal: days under 90°F, nights under 75°F)
- ☐ Use 40% shade cloth during heatwaves
- ☐ Reduce nitrogen fertilizer

5. PLANT FALLING OVER

- ☐ **Symptom:** Heavy vines collapsing or cage buckling
- ☐ Use 8-foot T-posts or cattle panels
- ☐ Try Florida Weave method with stakes and twine
- ☐ Install support system at planting time (not later!)

6. FUNGAL DISEASES

- ☐ **Early Blight:** Target-shaped brown spots on lower leaves → Prune bottom leaves, use copper fungicide
- ☐ **Late Blight:** Greasy gray patches, rapid blackening → Remove plant immediately
- ☐ **Septoria:** Tiny circular spots with dark borders → Improve air circulation, mulch

7. COMMON PESTS

- ☐ **Hornworms:** Large green caterpillars → Hand-pick at night with flashlight
- ☐ **Aphids:** Tiny bugs on leaf undersides → Blast off with water hose
- ☐ **Whiteflies:** Small flying insects → Use yellow sticky traps

8. LEAF CURL

- ☐ **Physiological:** Leaves curl in heat/wind (normal, no action needed)
- ☐ **Viral:** Curl + yellowing + stunting → Check for pests, remove if growth stops

9. SUNSCALD

- ☐ **Symptom:** White bleached patches on fruit
- ☐ Don't over-prune – leaves provide natural shade
- ☐ Use afternoon shade cloth if needed

10. POOR FLAVOR

- ☐ Let fruit ripen fully on vine (deep pinkish-red)
- ☐ Reduce watering 3-5 days before harvest
- ☐ NEVER refrigerate – store at room temperature

Garden Notes & Observations:
