



Growing tips for SV0215TH gourmet truss tomato

It is no surprise Queensland growers continue to choose SV0215TH with high yield, long shelf life and superior fruit uniformity, hallmark characteristics of this great variety.

Challenges have occurred when the majority of TY resistant hybrids are grown outside of preferred windows. Hybrids are affected by the combination of heat and humidity in January/February planting windows.

A few simple techniques in the early part of the season when hot and humid weather affect production may help extend the window of SV0215TH and enhance its performance.

FOR NURSERIES

For nurseries propagating SV0215TH seedlings, there are a few tips that will help to establish the variety.

- Plants should be mature but should not be too old or too hard.
- Initiation and cell division for the reproductive tissues happen while the plant is a seedling in the nursery.
- The optimum age for transplanting is when the stem girth reaches 4.88mm and the roots are fully bound.
- Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, and Boron nutrition is critical.
- A dramatic wet-dry and high-low EC cycle will promote flowering.
- Check seedling vegetative growth.



CHALLENGE

In hot and humid weather, SV0215TH can be very vigorous and the plant almost grows too quickly (vegetatively).



SOLUTION

To control accelerated growing, keep the plant short at the beginning. Prune it regularly to ensure fruit stays in spec for size.

FIELD PROCEDURES

PRE-PLANT

- A soil test is best but a rule of thumb is to treat soil with lime or cal-mag to a pH of 6.5.
- Pre-plant fertile soil with 50-50-50 NPK (kg/ha) in a band under the plastic mulch. In poor soils (typical of white loam soils around Bundaberg) use 50 - 60 (N) 80 - 100 (P) 80 - 100 (K).
- Pre-water with 50kg/ha MAP soluble or similar and water in plant.

TRANSPLANTING

- First irrigation at transplant should contain 50kg/ha calcium nitrate.
- Do not water the seedlings until soil is relatively dry after the initial watering-in. No more water and therefore fertigation for 10-15 days, until soil is getting dry. This develops a better root system. Towards the end it gives the plant mild stress to get it “thinking” about reproduction.

IN-CROP MANAGEMENT

- Mild stress is applied from transplanting until first budding.
- Do not stress excessively by withholding water, extra stress using EC.
- Nitrogen and Phosphorus are very important for flowering and fruit set and should be fertigated from first fertigation after resumption of watering, until the end of flowering.
- Phosphorus can be applied at a constant rate but Nitrogen should be applied hard from second truss flower opening until 14 days before first pick and then dropped lower, to allow fruit quality to develop.
- Contrary to popular belief, Nitrogen applications will not delay flowering. Excess Nitrogen can stretch internodes and make it appear that flowering is later. Nitrogen deficiency will lead to flower abortion, so it is important that early Nitrogen supply is adequate.

EC MANAGEMENT

- Potassium deficiency not only effects fruit quality but it can delay maturity.
- In low EC soil or with low EC water, early Potassium application in the form of Potassium Chloride (KCl) can be a valuable source of Potassium as well as a strategy to keep the EC at a level that encourages the plant to flower, while keeping nutrition adequate.
- EC should be kept high until the plants turn generative (using KCl as above if the soil and/or water are low EC).
- It is safest to maintain EC using higher EC fertigation (water plus high EC fertiliser) than by restricting water too much in the fast growth and setting phase. Higher EC also slows vegetative growth which is further slowed when flower setting starts.
- Overall, root zone should be drier for vegetative varieties than generative varieties, possibly larger irrigations and less often (see table below).

- Once plants are setting then irrigations can be increased and EC dropped slightly until near harvest.
- Adequate Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Boron, and Potassium are critical to ensure good fruit set and subsequent fruit quality.

FOLIARS

Foliar applications of fertiliser can be beneficial in periods of extreme waterlogging and are also beneficial to reduce transplant shock. Growers should seek independent advice on which products are most suitable to their operation and growing conditions. **Products listed are not in any way recommended or endorsed by Seminis and are for illustrative purposes only:**

- To reduce transplant stress, a foliar application of a seaweed formulation (e.g KELPAK) can be applied from first spray.
- Weekly foliar applications are an option to promote flowering from 2 weeks of age. There are several products on the market for example, Budmate with 22% Ca, 4.8% Zn, 4.8% Mg, 4.8% N, 0.14% B).
- Supa Trace Advance or similar at 10-14 Days After Planting (DAP) and 25-30 DAP.
- Bud Mate or similar at 15-18 DAP and then weekly for 4 weeks until enough flowers set.
- Foliar Potassium silicate is useful to improve plant health (or make it more resilient against disease) and fruit quality.

PRUNING

- Aim for a lower number of “heads” per hectare in autumn than spring.
- Please refer to our brochure regarding ideal spacing and pruning.

GENERATIVE VERSUS VEGETATIVE PLANTS **

Characteristic	Generative (reproductive) Growth	Vegetative Growth
Leaves	Flat and open, light green, soft	Curled, thick, dark green
Flowering	Close to the top of the plant Flowers open fast and uniform Rapid flowering within truss	Further from the top of the plant Flowers open poorly; sepals stick Poor uniform flowering within truss
Flower Color	Dark yellow	Pale, light yellow
Truss Stem	Thick, sturdy, short and curved	Thin, long and sticking upwards
Fruit	Large, many, good shape and fast development	Small, few, poor shape and slow development

Table 1. Steering the tomato plant: reproductive versus vegetative growth Jensen, 2004.

Plant balance	Plants are too vegetative (head strong and leafy, top of plant heavy, growing fast, not enough flowers)	Vegetative Growth (head small, plant top meagre, growing very slow, many new flowers, possibly many fruit)
Possible causes		
Genetics	Vegetative variety	Generative variety
Grafting	Grafted on strong root-stock	Not grafted on strong root-stock
Plant stage	Young	Mature
Season	Autumn, winter, spring	Summer
Growing system, medium, irrigation*	Ample water availability, or wet growing media (eg NFT)	Poor water availability, e.g. dry growing media
Growing conditions	Favourable, mild	Harsh, excessive (e.g. radiation)
Greenhouse	Lower/softer radiation, higher humidity (e.g. double plastic)	Higher/sharper radiation, slightly lower humidity (e.g. glass)
Energy screen, shade screen	Increasing humidity, lower radiation under shade screen	No screen used
Stress	Little or no stress	Stress from heat or dryness

Possible control	To steer in generative direction	To steer in vegetative direction
Radiation	Allow higher radiation	Shade to avoid excessive radiation
Temperature	Give higher day temperature (watch the 24h temperature)	Reduce day temperature (if needed increase night temp)
Pipe temperature	Give higher pipe temperature (with venting if needed)	Lower the pipe temperature
Air humidity	Give lower (harsher) air humidity	Give higher (milder) air humidity (by screening, adjusted venting, fogging, misting, roof sprinklers)
CO2	Increase the CO2 level	Lower the CO2 level
EC or CF*	Give higher EC (or CF)	Give lower EC (or CF)
Water in root-zone*	Drier root-zone	Wetter root-zone

Table 2. Elly Nederhoff & Bert Houter, April 2007.

GROWING CALENDAR

REGION	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
North Queensland					Sowing	Planting	Planting					
Central Queensland			Sowing	Planting			Sowing	Planting	Planting			
						Harvesting	Harvesting			Harvesting	Harvesting	Harvesting

Recommended time slot ■ Sowing ■ Planting ■ Harvesting

Contact your local Regional Business Manager to discuss performance in your area.

SUMMARY OF CHANGEABLE VARIABLES FROM ABOVE FINDINGS THAT FAVOUR GENERATIVE PLANTS.

- Use older seedlings (stem diameter at least 5mm).
- Drier beds immediately post transplanting.
- Higher EC until plants are generative.
- Adequate Nitrogen, Calcium, Boron, and Phosphorus during budding.
- Use of inter-row Muriate of Potash granules as an EC buffer for rain events.
- User lower stems per hectare (prune harder) in Autumn and this will also help.
- Prevent damp weather leaf diseases and blotchy ripening.

For more information, please contact your nearest Seminis Regional Business Manager by calling 1800 364 846 or scanning the QR code below to locate your nearest representative.



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