

Overhead Tomato Trellis for Raised Beds



This example of an easy-to-build tomato trellis is sufficient for staking two rows of plants.

This overhead tomato trellis is based on a technique that many commercial greenhouses use. I've modified it for raised beds. The system offers optimal airflow, space efficiency and is full-season strong, with minimal infrastructure. It works very well for pruned indeterminate vining tomato varieties and is pretty good even if you do not practice pruning. Sturdy twine anchors the crossbar to the tomato plants. Reusable plastic clips hold the twine to the main stem of the tomato plant, offering support without damaging the tender tomato cell-structure. Plants staked in this way have optimal flexibility. The notched boards can be reused for years. The clips and top pole may last 2-3 years. New twine is needed every year.

Materials and instructions

- **Two 2"x4" boards, 8 feet tall, notched with a 'V' at the top.** Center the boards between the two rows of plants, the end parallel to the ground. Use three 2" screws in a zigzag pattern to secure each 2x4 to the outside of the bed frame.
- **One 9-foot long pole.** I cut tall maple saplings for this, usually plentiful in crowded New England forests. Any sturdy 9 foot pole that is at least 1 inch thick in diameter, end to end, will do. Rest the pole in the two notches of the boards.
- **Sturdy garden twine and tomato clips.** Each plant gets its own string. Cut a length of about 8 feet for each plant. Loop the twine over the cross pole so that one end nearly touches the ground and the other hangs about midway between the pole and the ground. Tie a slipknot with the shorter end, over the long twine. Clip the long end to the base of the main stem of the tomato plant being careful to not damage the tender tomato stems and skin. Tighten the slipknot to secure the plant. As the plant grows taller, add clips every 8-14" along the main stem. The best place for clips is right below a sturdy leaf bract or a fruit set. As the plant gets heavier and the twine stretches, tighten the slipknot.



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