



## Teacher Tomato Facts

### Tomato History

There are so many ways to enjoy tomatoes; eaten like an apple fresh from the garden, underneath a layer of cheese and veggies on pizza or on top of spaghetti as sauce. It's hard to imagine life in the United States without the tomato. The truth is, Americans didn't start growing and eating them until the 1800's.

Many people believe our third President, Thomas Jefferson, was the first American to not only grow, but also eat the tomato. Up until this time, many thought the plant was beautiful decoration, but poisonous to eat.

By 1870, tomatoes began to be grown commercially. This means farmers grew them to sell to markets and buyers. It is believed that the first major farms to grow tomatoes for market in the United States were in Manatee County in the west-central region of Florida.

Today, Florida ships more than 1 billion pounds of fresh tomatoes to the rest of the United States, Canada and other countries. That is approximately 1 pound of tomatoes for each person living in India. That's a lot of a delicious fruit that eats like a vegetable.