

GROWING TOMATOES IN FLORIDA'S HEAT!®

by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida – August 11, 2026

I love to experiment with growing various plants on the south-facing pool deck of our home where full sun occurs all day long. Well, having all-day-long sun is one thing, but when you add in typical Central Florida's summertime-sustained-high heat and humidity, there are lessons to be learned, as I will describe in further detail here!

Most recently, while visiting the Orlando area to attend a business-related convention during late May/early June of this year, my daughter Beth from Boulder City, Nevada, decided to pay my wife and me a surprise visit! It just so happens that during this occasion when we were at a local Home Depot store together I purchased 2 each "Summer Set" tomato plants that were then planted in two 20-inch diameter pots on Jun 2, 2026. As a tribute to my daughter's visit, I have since named these plants "Beth's Summer Set" tomatoes and now today, August 11, my wife and I have just harvested our first very beautiful fruits from these plants - as you can see in the following photo. Unfortunately, even though the Summer Set tomato is supposedly a "heat tolerant" plant that is advertised as one that can thrive in Florida's hot weather, even with my close care including frequent watering, fertilization, etc., the plants are a disappointment and at best it seems the overall total harvest from our 2 plants will only be 24-26 fruits!



Previous to this attempt of mine to grow a potted heat-tolerant Summer Set tomato plant on our pool deck, I tried another variety called a "Heat Master" and it too was a bit disappointing and didn't live up to its advertised expectations!

So, what's a failed tomato gardener to do? Well, I have had some "raging success" in growing potted tomatoes on my pool deck during cooler weather, so the simple answer is: don't waste your time trying to grow tomatoes during Florida's hottest months; instead, you can be assured of success when planting/growing/harvesting these "jewels" just before or just after Florida's hottest months! I know that going forward that's exactly what I will do!