****

**For more information:**

Laurel Haislip/Becca Meyer

BRAVE Public Relations

404.233.3993

[lhaislip@emailbrave.com](mailto:lhaislip@emailbrave.com)

[bmeyer@emailbrave.com](mailto:bmeyer@emailbrave.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Pike Nurseries shares juicy tips for tasty tomatoes**

*Local garden center experts help green thumbs grow glorious tomatoes*

**ATLANTA (April 5, 2018) –** Spring is for planting veggies for bountiful harvests! Theexperts at **Pike Nurseries** are here to help gardeners “ketchup” on everything needed for growing the tastiest tomatoes in town. Whether growing cherry, heirloom or Brandywine varieties, the pros at Pike Nurseries are prepared to help green thumbs of all skillsets grow delicious and nutritious tomatoes for salads, sandwiches or slicing!

**Five Tips for Growing Tasty Tomatoes**

**Properly Prep Spaces**When selecting spaces for tomato plants, be sure to choose an area with plenty of natural, direct sunlight, preferably for at least six to eight hours per day. If a full-sun bed proves challenging, try planting tomatoes in pots so they can be easily moved to bright spaces.

**Amend Soil**When prepping the area to plant tomatoes, dig a hole that is about twice as big as the tomato pot. Remove the native soil and mix it at a 50/50 ratio with Pike Vegetable and Flower Mix to break up the dense clay soil and allow for better root growth, adding nutrients the veggies will need to produce an abundant harvest. This will improve drainage and balance soil pH for healthy vegetables. Be sure to backfill the hole about half way with the amended soil! When planting in containers, the experts suggest using Pike Potting and Container Soil, which contains wetting agents that help retain moisture in the soil. Add a handful of a starter fertilizer, like Dr. Earth Root Zone, at the bottom of the hole and mix in. The starter fertilizer will prevent transplant shock and help roots begin to establish.

**Bury and Stake Stems**When planting tomato plants, remove the bottom one or two levels of leaves and bury the plants up to that portion of the stem. New roots will sprout from the base of the stem, anchoring the plant in the dirt and ultimately providing a sturdier plant with more fruit. When planting or transplanting tomatoes, start plants out with tomato cages, especially for indeterminate varieties like Brandywine. Tomato cages are easier to insert when plants are young and will help support the tomato plants as they grow and keep fruit off the ground.

**Water Wisely**The key to tomato success is consistent water. Thoroughly soak tomato bedsat time of plantingand always water the soil directly rather than watering the leaves. Keeping the leaves dry will minimize the chance of fungus and disease, ultimately keeping tomatoes healthy and strong throughout the growing season. Water when the soil feels dry one to two inches down. Maintain a consistent watering schedule as irregular watering can cause the fruit to split. Fertilize every six weeks with Dr. Earth's Organic Tomato, Vegetable and Herb Fertilizer.

**Compost and Trim**Once plants reach a height of about three feet, remove the brown and fungus-ridden bottom leaves to prevent diseases from taking hold. When little sucker stems sprout from the base of larger stems, pinch them off to result in more fruit; they will just suck the energy away from the more profitable stems. While the first fruit is ripening, encourage new growth and continued fruit by spreading compost around the stem and trimming some of the upper leaves.

Green thumbs seeking more hands-on tips are encouraged to visit any Pike Nurseries store location on **Saturday, April 7** from **9 to 11 a.m.** for their FREE **Growing Tomatoes** class. Additionally, guests to any store location from **Friday, April 6 to Sunday, April 8** can enjoy **Tomato Time**, a celebration of these seasonal favorites, where attendees will receive a FREE one-gallon tomato plant to take home with any purchase, while supplies last.

The professionals at Pike Nurseries have all the expert advice for planting a bountiful harvest of tomatoes and other fruits and veggies! For more information and care tips, please visit your local Pike Nurseries location or visit [pikenursery.com/tomatoes](https://www.pikenursery.com/how-to-plant-tomatoes).

**ABOUT PIKE NURSERIES**

Ever committed to its customers’ gardening success, Pike Nurseries takes pride in taking the guesswork out of gardening and helping its customers play in the dirt. Offering superior knowledge, quality and selection in a friendly, caring environment, Pike Nurseries has been an Atlanta icon for over 60 years. Founded in 1958 by Pete Pike, its ability to adapt to market conditions and community needs has made it a respected Southern institution. As Atlanta’s oldest garden chain, Pike Nurseries has 17 retail locations in the Atlanta, Ga. and Charlotte, N.C. areas. Led by CEO Mike Kunce, Pike Nurseries looks forward to continued growth as it keeps Atlanta and Charlotte beautiful, one landscape at a time.

For more information, please visit Pike Nurseries online at [pikenursery.com](http://www.pikenursery.com/).

Visit Pike Nurseries on [Facebook](http://facebook.com/pikenurseries), [Twitter](http://twitter.com/pikenurseries), [Pinterest](http://pinterest.com/pikenurseries/) and [Instagram](http://instaprof.appspot.com/profile/pikenurseries).

# # #