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[Home](#) > On the Veranda - Doing the Verticilium Wilt

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This spring our hopes were high. We planted patio tomatoes on the office veranda. So burly were they, we anticipated salsa by June. We posted sign-up sheets in the kitchen, decided who would bring limes, weighed the virtue of cilantro, told stories about onions: their origins, The Bronze Age, mirepoix; shallots: their superiority to onions in sweetness and antioxidant content, the word "hoity-toity", Alfred Lord Tennyson; Vidalia, Texas, peaches, windows-of-opportunity, white versus purple, Alice Walker, anthocyanins. We debated corn in salsa, concluding to include only newly creamed off the cob.

Sitting beside our pots all through May eating our lunches together on the veranda with those strapping plants - practically bow-legged, their bristles glittering, we would kneel down to examine them congratulating ourselves on our healthy crew-cut sons who smelled like tomatoes even through their pores. Then summer at the office. Who's week to water? She's gone this week. They'll be fine. Gosh it was hot Saturday...oh, look at the tomatoes. Now on the veranda, we're doing the Verticilium wilt. Which is interesting too.

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