



Seed Starting 101

LET'S GET YOU GOOD TO GROW IN 2021

It is time to get this GARDEN started!

If you have never started seeds indoors before, this is your chance!

Follow these easy steps and get your own indoor planting station set up and thriving!

Materials

- Containers for planting
- Tray for water collection
- Seed Starting Mix or Potting Soil
- Seeds of your choice
- Water

Climate/Setting

- Light - these seedlings will need up to 12 hours of light for success. Find your brightest area and consider an additional fluorescent light source
- Temperature - Cool season crops (lettuce, broccoli) need 55-65 degrees to germinate and heat loving crops (tomatoes, peppers) need 65-80 degrees

How to: Planting the seeds

Step 1: Determine which containers you are going to use. Get creative!

Recycle toilet paper rolls or egg cartons, which are the perfect size for small seedlings. Give yogurt containers or milk cartons a second life as a small planting pot or make small pots out of newspaper with a can to form shape. Any container can be used but make sure to poke holes in the bottom for drainage and clean them with soap and water or a light bleach solution to prevent mold or other seed enemies.

Step 2: Mix your soil mix (medium) with water just enough to dampen it. Fill your containers and smooth the surface, but do not pack down as you want the seeds to have room to sprout.

Step 3: Use your finger or pencil to make a small hole in the soil at the depth and spacings recommended on the back of the seed package.

Step 4: Plant your favorite seeds! Typically you want the seed planted at a depth that is 2-3 times the width of the seed. Larger seeds will develop into larger plants so container selection should be taken into account.

Step 5: Water! Seeds actually don't need light to germinate (emerge from the soil) but they do need moisture. Turn an old water bottle into the perfect sprinkler by poking holes in the cover which will give the perfect light sprinkling tool and ensure that seeds are not disturbed. These containers may need watering even twice per day to keep soil consistently moist. Keeping your trays covered with clear plastic or lids help to maintain moisture will speed up the process.

How to: Caring for Seedlings

Temperature: Once the plants sprout (germination) they will require bottom heat to keep roots warm

Lighting: Keep that additional light source 2-4 inches from the top of the plants - you may need to adjust as they grow

Water: After the seedlings emerge, you don't need to water as frequently, let the soil dry out a little between watering. Too much water can lead to "dampening off" or dead plants, in other words.

Encouragement: Seedlings benefit from a bit of attention to make sure they are on the right track (just like puppies, kittens, or babies). Make sure you are turning trays for even light distribution, thinning crowded plants and ensuring good air circulation by brushing your hand over the leaves. These small steps can lead to survival of the fittest for your seedlings and ensure that the plants you put in the garden are as strong and healthy as can be!



Other Useful Links

[Seed Starting Container Kits](#) - if you want to purchase a station, there are many sets like this available at most gardening stores or hardware stores

[Supplemental Light Options](#) - if you don't have any options for additional lighting here are a few options

[Heating Mats](#) - these can be pricy, so consider placing your trays on a few towels to add a bit of insulation to the surface, and place your table near your heat source

[The New Seed Starters Handbook](#) - by Nancy Bubel; a great resource for all aspects of seed starting; also includes information on saving seeds from your own plants