

STARTING SEEDS INSIDE

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Some seeds germinate inside better than others.

VEGETABLE SEEDS include basil, chives, lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, bok choy, leeks, spinach, arugula, kale, collards, tomatoes. I'm trying peas this year inside. Peppers germinate easily but take FOREVER to grow so go buy them bigger! BUT I WILL TRY ANYTHING EXCEPT ROOT VEGGIES.

TIMING IS VERY IMPORTANT

Most newbies plant their seeds too early. This will cause the plants to get too tall and leggy in the pots before you are able to transplant outside. Check the seeds starting chart from Johnny's (or others) to get the planting chart for us. We are now in Zone 6a but I run the chart out for zone 5 still.

CONTAINERS

There are many different types of containers you can buy or collect. Be sure you clean and disinfect any previously used containers with a 10% bleach solution. If your containers don't have holes, you'll need to punch some in on the bottom.

GROWING MEDIUM

You should buy SEED STARTING MIX not potting soil. Some seeds starting mixes need to be wet before you plant. Just put some in a bucket and add water and mix up. Then fill up your pots. Do not use big pots to begin with. Use small pots. You will have to plant up in size as the they get bigger.

SOWING SEEDS

Follow directions on seed package as to what depth to plant seeds. Soil medium should be moist. Drop a couple of seeds in each container. I use a pencil, chop stick or my finger to make holes to drop seeds in depending on depth indicated and the size of the seed.

Lettuce I just sprinkle on top of the soil, press them in to make good contact and sprinkle some a little 'Play' sand over them just enough to cover them.

KEEP MOST SEEDS WARM

Cover the flats with plastic wrap or tops, then place on a seed heating mat, the top of your refrigerator or by a heating vent. Most seeds like about 70°F to germinate

BUT spinach likes cool germination temperatures. Plant in pots or pre-spout but don't put them on the seed heating mat.

Some people sprinkle a little milled sphagnum moss which is a natural fungicide to protect from 'dampening off' disease which affects seedlings.

Keep seeds moist but not super wet-Use a spray bottle to dampen the top of the

soil or water from bottom until germination.

AFTER GERMINATION

Take off plastic tops.

Remove from seed heating mat.

Move seedlings under lights or to a bright sunny window (not the best solution).

I use chamomile tea (4 cups water to one bag) and spray with a spray bottle when the seedlings break soil and do so until the first true leaves appear (which are actually the second set of leaves)

LIGHTING PLANTS

The BEST way to START PLANTS INSIDE is UNDER LIGHTS.

Make a light stand.

Use fluorescent shop lights-either regular or the daylight type. I like the daylight type. Hang with chain to raise and lower them.

Place the lights 2" above the plants. Move lights up as the plants grow.

Give the plants 12-16 hrs of lights each day. I give them 8 hours to 'sleep' with 16 hours of light -just like us!

Hook up lights to an electric timer to make your life easier!

TRANSPLANTING TO BIGGER CONTAINERS

Transplant after 2nd set of true leaves-roots will be big enough. Do not give them fertilizer yet. Feed them 'SuperThrive' and Seaweed solution only to help with shock.

Give transplants a weak solution of fertilizer 1 week after transplanting. As plant gets bigger, keep transplanting up to the next pot size.

PET THEM!

Brush them daily lightly with your hand to help them grow stocky and strong stems. You can also set up a small fan to blow on them.

GET THEM TOUGH! (BEFORE PLANTING OUTSIDE)

Approximate one week before you plan to transplant them outside, start to harden them off (get them use to the outside elements). On a warm day move the containers to a shaded PROTECTED spot for 1 hour (if possible) for the first day. Each day increase their time outside if weather permits.