



INDOOR SEED STARTING

SEED SELECTION



Choose items with multiple harvest potential such as leafy greens, lettuce, salad mixes, peas, carrots, and leafy herbs like basil, cilantro, and parsley.

Most seed is good for at least 3 years; larger seeds such as corn may not last as long. If using old seed, it is wise to do a germination test before mass planting.

WHEN TO PLANT



Check seed packet for details; may say “plant indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost.” Average last frost date for Portland metro area is April 15th.

SOIL



Use sterile, seed-starting mix (G&B Seed Starting Soil), jiffy pots of dehydrated coir, or coir bricks (pre-moisten soil before planting).

- Use biodegradable pots that can be planted directly in the ground, like peat pots or homemade newspaper.
- Plant 2–3 seeds per pot and thin as plants emerge.
- Remember to mark your seeds with labels.

PLANTING DEPTH



Depth depends on seed type—check packet.
Good rule of thumb: Plant 3 times as deep as the seed is wide; better to plant too shallow than too deep.

WATER & MOISTURE



Keep seed bed thoroughly wet; water gently and consistently.

- Solid-bottom trays and clear, plastic humidity domes help maintain moisture; remove dome after seeds germinate. A spray bottle is also handy for moisture.
- Some seeds benefit from soaking in water overnight or up to 24 hours before planting (e.g. large, hard-shelled ones like garden peas).

LIGHT



Bright light is essential! Place near sunny east- or south-facing window or supplement with full-spectrum fluorescent or LED light bulb 12–13 hours a day.

GERMINATION



It can take several days or weeks to germinate (depends on seed type; check packet details).

- To speed up germination, add a heat mat under seedling trays; remove after seeds have sprouted.
- Some seeds, like peas, can be soaked overnight in room temperature water to speed up the process.

FIRST/TRUE LEAVES



The first “leaves” to appear are the cotyledon—the embryonic leaves of a seedling. After these, the seedling produces its **first set of true leaves** that more closely resemble those of the adult plant.

FERTILIZING



Once seeds germinate and grow their first set of true leaves, feed weekly to every 10 days with G&B Organics All Purpose Liquid Fertilizer (3-2-3) diluted to ½ or ¼ strength.

TRANSPLANTING



Wait for the 2nd or 3rd set of true leaves before transplanting to the garden.

- Check seed packet for best time to plant outside.
- Monitor soil temperature with a soil thermometer; pay attention to nighttime lows.
- Slowly transition seedlings outdoors by placing them out for increasing amounts of time over several days.
- Protect from extreme sun, wind, and rain while small. If needed, use a floating row cover for protection.

If indoor gardening is not for you, it's easy to grow from seed outdoors by sowing directly into garden soil.

It can greatly improve seeding results by planting at a proper soil temperature; monitor with a soil thermometer.

Many crops actually prefer to be sown outside rather than indoors. Plant these crops when soil reaches at least 40°F: beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chard, endive, lettuce, onion, parsley, parsnip, peas, radish, spinach.