

Seed Starting Indoors

Starting plants from seed is an immensely rewarding experience and an economical way to grow a garden. Indoor seed starting requires bright light, adequate moisture, high humidity, and a watchful eye.



WHEN TO PLANT

- **Check seed packet for details:** Timing may be written as “sow X number of weeks before last frost date”—average last frost date for the Portland metro area is April 10th.



SOIL

- Use a **sterile, seed-starting mix** like **G&B Seed Starting Soil**, jiffy pots of dehydrated coir, or coir bricks. Be sure to 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

- **Planting depth depends on seed type** (check packet). Good rule of thumb—plant three times as deep as the seed is wide; better to plant too shallow than too deep.



WATER & MOISTURE

- **Keep soil thoroughly wet;** water gently and consistently.
- **Help keep seedlings hydrated** by using a spray bottle to spritz the soil surface.
- **Help maintain moisture** with a clear, plastic humidity dome; remove after seeds germinate.
- **Place pots in a solid-bottomed tray** to prevent leaking.



LIGHT

- **Bright light is essential!** Place near a 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 for 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 temp water before planting to speed up germination.



TRUE LEAVES

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



FERTILIZER

- Use **G&B Organics All Purpose** liquid fertilizer (3-2-3) diluted to ½ or ¼ strength.
- **Feed seedlings weekly or every 10 days** once seeds have germinated and grown their first set of true leaves.



TRANSPLANTING

- **Wait for the second or third set of true leaves** before transplanting to a larger pot or out into 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.