

# Grow Your Garden Plants From Seed!

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Starting your own plants from seed is EASY and ECONOMICAL!

To grow healthy seedlings, you will need:

1. **Container** – plastic clamshell containers, cardboard egg crates, plastic food trays, etc. Make sure there are holes for drainage, then place on a cookie sheet or Styrofoam tray.
2. **Soil** – Use a good-quality potting mix, not garden soil. Look for a mix that contains perlite and vermiculite. Cheap mixes sometimes use Styrofoam .
3. **Water** – Water in your seeds with a spray bottle or pump sprayer. Don't drown them! Soil should be kept evenly moist while seedlings are young. If you have chlorinated water, use bottled spring water on your seed trays.
4. **Warmth** – Keep seed flats between 65-75F for best germination. Don't place them on cold, drafty windowsills. Remove clear plastic covers once seedlings have emerged.
5. **Light** – Use a twin-bulb fluorescent strip light. Choose broad-spectrum fluorescent bulbs which say Natural Light or Daylight. Hang the light from a chain or use blocks to hold it 1-2" above the seedlings as soon as they emerge. Keep lights on for 12-14 hours/day. Turn off the lights at night – seedlings won't stretch in total darkness.
6. **Fertilizer** – Feed your seedlings with an organic fertilizer, such as Espoma Plant-Tone at transplant. Either mix it into your potting mix before transplanting or sprinkle a tiny bit on top of the soil and water in.

Transplant your seedlings to individual containers when they develop their first set of true leaves. Hold the seedlings at the base and gently separate them from each other. Take care not to damage the roots or stem. Poke a hole in the new container and put the seedling into it. Firm the soil around it and water in.



**Start these plants indoors:** (early to mid-April)

**Veggies:** broccoli, cabbage, eggplant, lettuce, pepper, tomato

**Herbs:** basil, chives, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, thyme

**Annual Flowers:** cosmos, celosia, dahlia, marigold, viola, zinnia

Perennial seeds can be started indoors 8-10 weeks before the last frost (Memorial Day). Perennials usually won't bloom until the following year.

**Direct sow these in the garden:** (May/June)

**Veggies:** beans, beets, carrot, corn, cucumber, lettuce, peas, pumpkin, radish, squash

**Herbs:** cilantro, dill

**Annual Flowers:** nasturtium, morning glory, sunflower, sweet pea