

Let's Get Growing Indoors!

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Objectives

Identify the key elements for successful indoor gardening. Learn how to plant seeds.

Indoor Growing Basics

Setting up an indoor growing area

-Growing seeds indoors is fun and easy.

-You will need supplemental light and a space where plants can grow for a few months. Prepare for mess. Seedlings become leggy and weak when there is insufficient light.

These plant starts will be targets for pests and diseases.

-Keeping lights close to the seedlings will ensure that you grow compact plants that will be healthy and vigorous. Cool florescent bulbs are perfect for indoor growing.

Inexpensive 4' shop lights can be found a garage sales or thrift stores.

-Hang the lights from hooks in the ceiling or make a stand to hang them from. Make sure lights can be adjusted higher or lower as plants grow.

Tips for indoor growing

- Hang lights 2-3" above potting soil or plant starts
- Set lights on a 12-hour timer
- Use fresh potting soil or sterile seed starting mix
- Sanitize recycled pots in a mild bleach solution
- Use a small fan for air circulation
- Keep temperature between 68° F and 78° F
- If seedlings become leggy –
 lights are not sufficient, it is too warm or seeds are over-crowded – start again
- Keep seeds moist until they sprout, then water daily

Sprouts and Microgreens

Growing and eating sprouts is fun. Sprout alfalfa, cover, radish, broccoli or mung beans. If you are adventurous try sprouting some sunflower seeds, wheat or oats. Eat your little baby greens. Eat the tiny seedlings that you thin.

Planting seeds

All seeds are planted to a depth of 2-3 times the thickness or diameter of the seed.

Large seeds such as peas, beans or nasturtiums go in a small hole.

Small seeds such as carrots, mustard and lettuce can be scattered on the top of the soil and then covered with a thin layer of soil.

How to plant a seed in a pot:

- Fill the pot to the top with potting soil
- Pat the bottom of the pot to settle the soil
- Level off the soil
- Make a hole or place seeds on the soil
- Cover seeds with a sprinkle of soil and pat the soil gently
- Water carefully and keep the soil moist until seeds sprout

When to start seeds for transplanting

Most plant starts that you see at the store are already 1-2 months old when you buy them. You can get a jump on the planting season and save some money by starting some vegetables, flowers and herbs from seed indoors. These starts will be transplanted later to the garden. Generally, you will sow seeds about 4-8 weeks before transplanting. Plan to start most things about a month before it is warm enough to put them outside in the garden.

Cool Season Vegetables

40°-60° F, 45°-50° F Soil temp.

Sow indoors to transplant in February and March.

Transplant kale and lettuce to garden 4 to 6 weeks after sowing.

Transplant to the garden: onions mid-March through April; leeks mid-March through mid-May.

Warm Season Vegetables

60° F or warmer, 55°-60° F Soil temp.

Sow tomatoes indoors to transplant from late February through late March.

Sow squash indoors in April.

Sow basil indoors in May.

Transplant under cloche late May to early June.

Favorite Potting Soils (in order of preference)

Gardner and Bloome Blue Ribbon Blend Potting Soil

Gardner and Bloome Potting Soil

Cedar Grove Potting Soil

Black Gold Potting Soil (too rich for starting seeds)

Books

Maritime Northwest Garden Guide, 2nd Ed. by Lisa Taylor, 2014.

Your Farm in the City, An Urban Dwellers Guide . . ., by Lisa Taylor, 2011.

Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades by Steve Solomon, 2007.

Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest by Russell Link, 2004.

Winter Gardening in the Maritime Northwest by Binda Colebrook, 2013.

Cool Season Gardener by Bill Thorness, 2013.

Seed Houses That Offer Heirloom Varieties

Adaptive Seeds adaptiveseeds.com

Deep Harvest Seeds deepharvestfarm.com

Fedco Seeds fedcoseeds.com

Johnny's Selected Seeds johnnyseeds.com

Kitazawa Seed Co. kitazawaseed.com

Peace Seeds peaceseedslive.blogspot.com

Seed Savers Exchange seedsavers.org

Territorial Seed Company territorialseed.com

Uprising Seeds uprisingorganics.com

Supplies

A. M. Leonard, Horticulture Tool Supply Co., Piqua, OH, amleo.com

Grower's Supply Co., Iowa & Connecticut growerssupply.com

Charlie's Greenhouse and Garden, Mt Vernon, WA, charleysgh.com

Lee Valley Tools, (800) 871-8158, leevalley.com

OBC Northwest Inc., Greenhouse and Garden Supplies, Canby OR, obcnw.com

Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, Grass Valley, CA, GrowOrganic.com