

# Seed Starting

*Growing your own plant with a tiny little seed can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your gardening life!*

## *Starting Seed Indoors...*

**Light...**A window or normal household light is not adequate light for starting seedlings indoors. Fluorescent tubes work the best. Use at least a double tube setup with one tube being a cool-white and one tube being a warm-white. Tubes should be no more than 3" away from the seedlings. Seedlings should receive 16 hours of light (a dark period is important, so don't leave lights on for 24 hours...use an automatic timer).

**Moisture...**Seedlings must be kept moist (not soggy) at all times. Use a humidity dome until seedlings emerge to help ensure proper moisture levels.

**Temperature...**For most varieties, normal household temperature (70 - 80 degrees) is ideal for germination; 60 - 70 degrees will work just fine. A 10 degree drop in temperature at night is also preferable.

**Soil...**We recommend seed starting soil or Jiffy Pellets for most successful results.

**HARDENING OFF:** When your plants are ready to go outside, start slowly! Put them outside for a few hours everyday; slowly increase the time outdoors daily. In a week to ten days, they will be ready for outdoors.

## *When to Sow Seeds...*

**Inside...** Generally, tomatoes are started inside 6-8 weeks before the average last frost (usually around May 15th), peppers 8-10 weeks, onions 8-12 weeks.

**Outside...** Warm season crops, crops that are frost sensitive such as beans, cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash and watermelons should be sown AFTER the average last day of frost. Cool season crops such as carrots, lettuce, peas, radish, chard and many leafy greens can be sown as early as 8-10 weeks before the average last frost for a spring harvest and in late summer for a fall crop (see specific variety information on the front and back of each packet). Most annual flowers are generally sown around the average last frost date even though some can be sown earlier. Perennial flower seed Flower seed can vary from 4-12 weeks before the average last frost depending on the variety. For specific variety in can be sown almost anytime – early spring through late summer – as long as they have enough time to germinate and get a root system established. Even a late fall sowing works – seeds stay in the ground dormant until conditions in early spring permit the seeds to germinate.

See **Botanical Interest Seed Sowing Guide** for a timetable of when to start specific seeds.

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Keep your  
Seedlings  
sprouting with  
joy using these  
key items...

1. Seeds of your choice.
2. Seed Starting Soil or Jiffy Pellets.
3. Pots or flat tray.
4. Humidity dome.
5. Watering can.

*Did you  
know...*

*The last  
frost date in  
this area is*

*May 15th!*

*Feel free to stop in, email or call Good Earth anytime with any questions.*

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