

Starting Seeds Indoors



Here are tips from *The Old Farmer's Almanac* on how to **start your seeds indoors**.

- Team up with a neighbor for starting seeds, since a packet often yields much more than you will need.
- Don't start your seeds too early, especially tomatoes! Most annual flowers and vegetables should be sown indoors about 6 weeks before the last frost in your area.
- [See our annual Best Planting Dates for Seeds chart](#) which is based on your frost dates and by the Moon.
- You may have to soak, scratch, or chill seeds before planting, as directed on packet.
- Use clean containers. Most seed catalogs offer seedling flats, peat pots, and other growing containers, but egg carton compartments make good containers, too. Be sure to poke holes in the sides near the bottom of the containers you use.
- Label your containers now! There's nothing more frustrating than forgetting what you planted.
- Fill clean containers with seedling mix. Use soilless peat moss and mix in equal parts vermiculite and perlite to hold enough water and allow oxygen to flow. Don't use potting soil.
- Pour soilless mix into a large bucket and moisten with warm water. Fill your containers to just below the rim.
- Plant your seeds according to your seed packet. Most seeds can simply be gently pressed into the mixture; you can use the eraser end of a pencil to push in seeds.

Seed Tip: When planting seeds, plant the largest seeds in the package to get the best germination rate.

- Cover containers with plastic. Prick holes with a toothpick for ventilation. Water

as directed.

- Water newly started seedlings carefully. A pitcher may let the water out too forcefully. A mist sprayer is gentle but can take a long time. Try using a meat-basting syringe, which will dispense the water effectively without causing too much soil disruption.
- Find a place in the kitchen where there is natural bottom heat—on top of the refrigerator or near the oven. (Move the tray if the oven is on, as it may become too hot.)
- Seeds sprout best at temperatures of 65 to 75°F (18 to 24°C).
- When seedlings appear, remove the plastic and move containers into bright light.
- When the seedlings get their second pair of leaves, prepare individual pots filled with a potting mix with plenty of compost. Move the seedlings carefully to the new pots and water well. Keep pots out of direct sun for a few days.

[Now, go to our article on how to transplant your seedlings!](#)

More Like This



**Blog:
Planting an
Organic...**



**Great Gifts
for
Gardeners**



**Grow an
Indoor Salad
Garden
from...**



Cosmos



**Gardening
Tips: Green
Thumbs'
Tell...**



Geraniums

Pumpkins

Lettuce Grow!