

Seed Starting

What, When, and How

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

Starting Seeds Indoors

Light: Fluorescent growing lights work best when growing seeds indoors, as they provide adequate light. Use at least a double tube setup with one tube being a cool-white and another tube being a warm-white. Light tubes should be no more than 3" away from the seedlings. All seedlings should receive 16 hours of light (A dark period is important, so do not leave the lights on for more than 16 hours.)

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

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

Soil: Espoma Seed Starting Soil or Jiffy Pellets are recommended for most successful results.

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, and onions 8-12 weeks.

Outside:

- Warm season/frost sensitive crops (beans, cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash, and watermelons) should be sown AFTER the average last day of frost.
- Cool season crops (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.
- Most annuals are sown around the average last frost date. See packet for some that can be sown earlier.
- Perennial flower seeds can vary from 4-12 weeks before the last frost time, depending on the variety.
- Always check the specifications on the seed packets. All seeds need enough time to germinate and get a root system established.
- A late fall sowing works as seeds stay in the ground dormant, until the conditions in early spring permit the seeds to germinate.

See **Botanical Interests Seed Sowing Guide** for a time table of when to start specific seeds.
www.botanicalinterests.com

Good Earth Garden Market

11650 Falls Road | Potomac, MD 20854 | 301.765.0224
www.gegardenmarket.com

