



SEED STARTING TIP SHEET

Planting a school garden or home vegetable garden is a wonderful way to teach children about the natural world, take a break from TV and computer screens, and get kids excited about moving their bodies and eating healthy foods. If your class or family is brand new to gardening, we encourage you to start small—a few pots filled with soil can be perfect for learning to garden. Use the information below to get started with planting from seed.

Basic Seed Sowing Steps:

1. Find some trays or pots, or use recycled materials like a paper egg carton, or plastic yogurt or take-out containers (just poke some holes in the bottom for drainage).
2. Fill the seed trays/pots with potting mix or seed-starter soil mix.
3. Moisten the surface of the soil.
4. Plant a few seeds of the same variety in each pot (refer to the seed packet for instructions on how deep to plant each variety in the soil.)
5. Be sure to label each pot with the type of plant and date you planted the seeds--popsicle sticks make great labels!
6. Place the seed tray or pots in a warm, sunny place.
7. Check your seeds daily and water them gently each time the soil starts to feel dry.
8. Once your seedlings have a few leaves and are getting too big for their small pots, gently remove the seedlings (leaving their soil intact) from their pots and transplant them to bigger pots or garden beds.
9. Don't forget to check your seed packets for instructions on how far apart to space your seedlings when transplanting them. Plants that are placed too close together will compete for sunlight and nutrients and may not grow to their full size.
10. Continue to water your plants every few days (or whenever the soil feels dry).

Deciding When and Where to Plant Your Seeds:

Use the chart below to decide when and where to plant common vegetable seeds. Some plants grow best in cool weather, while others require warm weather to grow. As a general rule of thumb, most plants we eat the leaves or roots of can be planted in spring/fall, while plants whose fruits we eat grow best during the summer. Cool season crops can be planted through the spring, and again in the late summer for a fall harvest. Warm season plants should only be seeded/transplanted into the garden after the danger of frost has passed. It's also important to note that some seeds grow best when they're planted, or "sown", directly into the garden soil. Other plants grow best when started in trays or cups and then transplanted into the garden as seedlings after the soil warms.

Seed Type	Cool or Warm Season Crop	Direct Seed or Transplant
Arugula	Cool	Direct seed or transplant
Beets	Cool	Direct seed
Broccoli	Cool	Transplant
Cabbage	Cool	Transplant
Carrots	Cool	Direct seed
Collard greens	Cool	Transplant
Cucumbers	Warm	Direct seed or transplant
Chard	Cool or warm	Direct seed or transplant
Cilantro/coriander	Cool	Direct seed
Eggplants	Warm	Transplant
Green beans	Warm	Direct seed
Kale	Cool	Direct seed or transplant
Lettuce	Cool	Direct seed or transplant
Marigold flowers	Warm	Transplant
Okra	Warm	Direct seed or transplant
Peppers	Warm	Transplant
Radishes	Cool	Direct seed
Spinach	Cool	Direct seed
Tomatoes	Warm	Transplant
Turnips	Cool	Direct seed
Winter Squash	Cool	Direct seed
Zucchini/summer squash	Warm	Direct seed