

Starting Seeds

Starting your own flower or vegetable garden can be easy. With this brochure you will learn;

- the best time to start seeds
- the conditions that seeds need to grow
- what you will need to start seeds and
- how to plant seeds

When can I start seeds?

Seeds can be started as early as January indoors on a sunny window or directly outdoors as early as February. Some plants are hardier than other and their seeds can be started earlier outdoors. Check the seed package, catalogue, or website to determine the best time to start your seeds. Have a look at the chart below for some of the most common seeds:



Month	Start Indoors	Start Outdoors
January	Begonias, Geraniums, Impatiens, Pansies	None
February	Ageratum, Coleus, Cosmos, Lobelia, Marigolds, Petunias, Snapdragons, Celery, Lettuce, Leeks, Onions	Broad Beans, Garlic, Onion sets and Multipliers
March	Alyssum, Aster, Balsam, Dahlia, Marigolds, Nasturtiums, Salvia, Zinnia, Basil, Broccoli, Parsley, Peppers	Sweet Peas, Potatoes, Lettuce, Peas, Radish, Spinach
April	Asparagus, Cucumbers, Pumpkins, Squash, Tomatoes	Beets, Carrots, Eggplant, Kale, Leeks, Onions, Swiss Chard
May	Late Broccoli, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts	Asparagus, Beans, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Corn, Cucumber, Squash

Where can I start seeds?

If you are starting your seeds early they can be started indoors on a sunny windowsill in trays or pots. For later seeds they can be planted directly in the garden beds. Covering your seeds with plastic or cloth will help to retain heat and moisture, and it will protect the young seedlings from late frosts or insects. Just be sure to allow for some air circulation to prevent mould or other diseases.

What do I need to start seeds?

There are several important things that you will need for starting seeds. This includes:

- Flower or vegetable seeds
- Seed trays (or pots)
- Sterile growing medium (potting soil or starter mix)
- Fertilizer (ex. Plant Prod Starter Mix 10-52-10)
- Bulb Dust (optional)



How do I plant seeds?

Place the growing medium (soil) in the trays or pots. Ensure that the medium is flat and level. Gently shake the tray or press the medium down to remove any large air pockets. The growing medium helps to ensure that the seeds do not dry out and that the seedlings do not suffocate due to excess water.

If the soil is kept too wet the surface may develop a mould or a 'Damping-Off' fungus will attack the seedlings at the soil surface causing them to rot. Bulb Dust can be used to prevent these problems.

Next make a small depression or hole to place the seeds in. The holes should be approximately one to two inches apart. The hole should be about twice as deep as the seed is wide. Place the seed in the hole and cover. Very small seeds can be placed on the surface and then covered with a thin layer of growing medium, sand, or vermiculite.

Keep the growing medium warm, 18° to 20 C (65 to 75 F), and ensure that it stays moist by covering with a plastic dome or misting with water. Keep the tray (or pots) in a brightly lit location but not in direct sunlight.

When the seedlings have developed two or more sets of leaves you can thin them out by removing the weakest ones. You can then transplant the strongest ones into a larger pot with more growing medium. At this point you can begin fertilizing with Miracle Gro or 20-20-20 fertilizer.

