

## Starting Seeds Inside

Written by RSF

Tuesday, April 07, 2009 - 01:57 -

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- Where to start your seeds? You can use commercial items such as plastic cell packs, peat pots, or fiber pots, you can also use cardboard milk cartons, pie plates, or olive oil cans. The key is to hold the soil and allow for proper drainage.

- Planting mixture is crucial. Use
  - Potting Mix
  - Seed-starting mix
  - Horticultural vermiculite
  - Half perlite and half vermiculite or
  - Peat moss, compost, coarse sand, and vermiculite
  
- How to plant your seeds
  - Fill the container to about ½ inch or so from the top with your chosen plant medium
  - Sprinkle the mix gently with water. A mister is helpful for this task.
  - Press the planting mix gently with your palm or with a flat surface. You don't want to create any dips or impressions

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- Sow the seeds according to the directions on the packet.
- Mist with a fine spray of water
- Place the container in a warm spot, preferably 70°F
  
- Keep the temperature above 65°F and 5-10 degrees cooler at night
- Keep warm and moist until the seedlings appear
- Once they appear – place the container in a window where they get as much sunlight as possible. Turn the pots or trays every day so all the seedlings get an equal amount of exposure
  - If you don't have adequate window space you can use a grow light. When they are small, put the plants about 6-8 inches from the light. Keep the light on 12-16 hours per day
  
- After the first set of true leaves appear, you should use a liquid fertilizer every 2 weeks
  
- Be sure not to overwater or overfertilize
- Approximately 2 weeks before you plant them in your garden, you need to get them ready for transplantation; they need to be hardened off.
  - Start by lowering the temperature in the room and reducing the amount of light
  - After a couple of days, you can move them outside to a protected shady spot. Don't do this if it's windy, raining, or below 45°F. Bring plants back in at night.
  
- During this process water regularly but sparingly
- After about 2 weeks your seedlings should be ready to make the big move outdoors to the garden. Keep a close eye on the weather and be sure to cover newly planted seedlings should a cold front come through.