

Growing Vegetable Plants From Seed

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Many vegetables are easy to grow from seed. In September you can start them off in pots and trays in a warm place



Seeds need:

Warmth (indoors to germinate then outside in a coldframe or green house once they are up)

Moisture (not too wet or too dry)

Oxygen (a light, airy potting mix which isn't packed down)

Steps to sowing seeds in pots

Choose trays or pots which are at least 10cm deep. If they have been used before, wash them in water.

Choose your seeds

Write labels

Fill the container with seed raising mix to within 2 cm of the top

Tamp it down to make a flat surface

Small seeds: Sprinkle the seeds on top and cover very lightly with more mix

Large seeds: Press individually into the mix, point down. Cover with mix

Water the trays of seeds by standing in a sink or bucket of water until the surface is damp

Keep the trays moist by covering the tray with paper or plastic

Sit the trays somewhere warm (inside, on hot water cylinder,) until the seedlings appear (3 days to ten days)

Once the seedlings are up, uncover and put them outside in a coldframe or tunnel house where there is plenty of sunlight

Open the cold frame daily when its sunny and close it up at night or if the weather is cold

Keep the mix just damp. Not too wet or too dry

Check at night with a torch and pick off slugs and snails, or use slug poison

When the seedlings are big enough to handle they can be carefully pricked out to give them more space

As the plants grow they need food. Feed with dilute liquid manure made from manure or collected from a worm bin.

When the plants have grown and the weather is warm enough, plant them out into the soil or large container.

Direct sowing

Carrots, parsnips radishes and many fast growing vegetables such as rocket are sown directly into the garden.

This is because they do not like being transplanted.

Green Footprint seed raising workshop 2011

Home made seed raising mix

Commercial seed raising mix is very good, but it's worth making your own if you are using large amounts.

Recipe one:

Mix together 2 parts compost plus 1 part fine pumice or sand
(optional: replace 1 part compost with vermicast - worm castings from the worm bin)

Recipe two:

2 parts fine composted bark (from garden centre) plus one part pumice or sand

Home made liquid manure for feeding young vegetable plants:

Collect a bucket of cow, sheep, horse or poultry manure, seaweed or fresh compost

Get a sack or old pillow case and fill with the manure, seaweed or compost

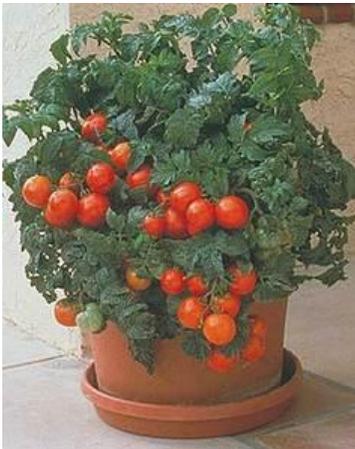
Tie the top firmly and place inside a larger bucket or plastic bin, which has a tightly fitting lid

Fill with water, and put the lid on tightly- it smells!

The longer you leave the manure, the better, but you can use it after a few days

Dilute the liquid to the colour of weak tea and water around the roots of your seedlings once a week.

Container vegetable gardening



Tomato in pot



lettuce in plastic trough

- Have vegetable pots in a sunny spot near the door where you will see them daily - they need lots of attention
- The container should be at least 25cm deep. The bigger the better, as long as you can move it!
- Place coarse gravel or broken china in the bottom for drainage
- Fill with potting mix
- Plant in the vegetable/s, being careful not to crowd them. One tomato plant per bucket is good.
- Mulch the surface with leaves, straw, woodchips or similar to keep the moisture in
- Keep the mix moist at all times and check for slugs and snails. Keep cats and dogs away
- Stop the container getting too hot in summer . the roots will get stressed
- Feed weekly with liquid manure
- Vegetables to grow in containers include: tomatoes, chillies, capsicum, lettuce, basil, peas, beans (need something to climb up) and strawberries