

# How to START SEEDS

## 10-STEP GUIDE

Finding yourself with more time on your hands? Hoping to secure a reliable food source for your family? Want to grow healthy food while helping the planet? Whatever your reason, starting a backyard vegetable garden, balcony container garden or windowsill herb tray is a great way to connect with our natural world...and reap the delicious benefits!



**1. Gather your materials:** You'll need potting soil, a container (an egg carton, leftover pots or a soil block maker), popsicle sticks, a marker and your seeds.



**2. Prepare the potting soil:** Wet the soil with water and knead like bread until the soil begins to clump together. Make sure you pack your containers to the top.



**3. Poke holes:** Once your container is full, it is time for seeds. Create a hole for your seed (At least two times as deep as the width of the seed) using a pencil tip or your finger.



**4. Select your seeds:** Prolific growers that are appropriate for indoor starting include herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, lettuce and summer squashes.

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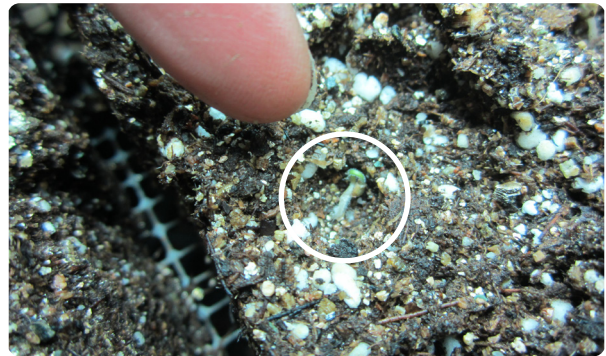
**5. Sow your seeds:** Place 1 to 2 seeds in each hole. Cover with a loose dusting of soil; we need oxygen to help our seeds germinate!



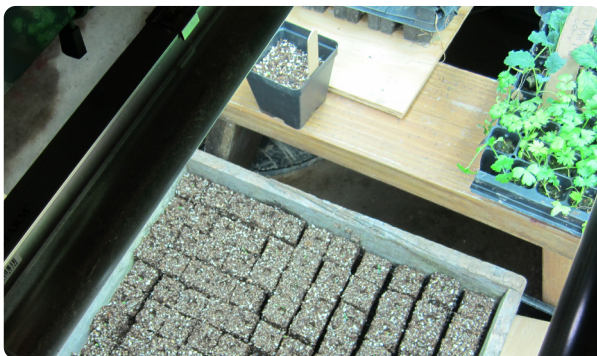
**6. Label your containers:** Write the type of vegetable and date planted on individual popsicle sticks.



**7. Store in a warm, dark place:** Seeded trays need time, moisture and darkness to germinate. You can cover the trays with newspaper or plywood or store them in the basement until germination occurs.



**8. Keep moist and check in:** Check on your seeds daily to make sure the moisture is adequate, and seeds have not yet started to germinate.



**9. Germinated seeds need light!** Once seeds start to germinate (look for a small white root coming out of the seed), place them under artificial or natural light as soon as possible. If you don't have grow-lights (preferred for 24/7 growth), place in a windowsill with at least eight hours of direct sunlight. Rotate window plant trays for even growth.



**10. Hardening off:** Nearing the date of the last frost, it's time to acclimate them to being outside. Begin hardening off your plants by placing them in an outdoor greenhouse or wind-break structure for an increased amount of time during the day. Bring plants in for bedtime.