

# SEED STARTING

## WHY START YOUR OWN SEEDS?

- 1- Save Money
- 2 - More Choices
- 3 - Healthier Plants
- 4 - Rewarding Experience
- 5 - It's Easy

## WHEN TO START SEEDS?

Look for days to Maturity on seed packets - it is the number of days the plant will take to produce fruit **after being transplanted**. Seeds should be started 4 to 6 weeks earlier than that target date.

## WHAT SUPPLIES WILL YOU NEED?

**Containers** - must have drainage hole, or pots that allow water to seep out. Too much water will drown seeds. Plastic domes help to create humid environment for seeds. Use plastic wrap for some. Seeds need warmth and water to germinate. Some plants do not like their roots to be disturbed. For those, you can use fiber pots for seeds.

**Growing Medium** - Seed Starting Mix - loose and light weight and free from bark and sticks. It holds moisture. Another option is dehydrated pellets, which are less economical than plastic seed trays. Grow seeds that have the same germination rates together.

**Premoisten** the seed starting medium before you fill the container. Consult the seed packet for the depth of planting - generally it is 1.5 - 2 times the width of the seeds. Plant 2 seeds per cell.

**Temperature** - seeds need warmth and water. Use a heating mat under the tray if necessary.

**Moisture** - water lightly. After covering the seeds with a very light layer of medium, use a mister to water the top. The moisture from the top helps make sure that there is good seed to soil contact.

**Plant Markers** - you will want to know which plant is which for transplanting.

**Light** - grow lights. Without grow lights, seedlings can become leggy and weak. Unless you have a shade house =)

**Seeds** - use new seeds, not old seeds. Germination rates will lower and the seeds can deteriorate over time. Some seeds will not germinate at all after a few years. New seeds will give you robust plants. Buy varieties that have been developed for your Zone - 10b and 11a. **Read the seed packet!**