Start Your Own Seedlings Indoors

MATERIALS FOR SUCCESS

- Top quality seed starting planting media (do NOT use garden soil)
- Clean containers with drainage holes (new or sterilize recycled with 10% bleach solution)
- Trays that do not drain (optional)
- Seeds
- Water
- Fertilizer
- Labels and markers
- Plastic dome or plastic wrap
- Seedling heat mat (optional)
- Fluorescent light fixtures (either cool white or one cool white and one natural daylight tube)
- Plant light stand with adjustable chains
- Light timer (optional)
- Soil thermometer

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Start Your Own Seedlings Indoors

WASATCH FRONT VEGETABLE CHART

Average First Frost Free Day = May 1-15

Start transplants indoors earlier than planting dates for outdoor planting to be sure your choices will ripen before frost.

Know when to plant

Know the average last spring frost date for your area.

1. Refer to Utah State University Climate Center: climate.usurf.usu.edu/reports/freezeDates.php

2. Read seed packet for specific plant requirements

- When to plant
- Suggested planting depth and spacing
- Germination period
- Days to maturity: the number of days until harvest to be sure your choices will ripen before frost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable Crop from Seed</th>
<th>Days to Maturity</th>
<th>Mar. 1</th>
<th>Mar. 15</th>
<th>Apr. 1</th>
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<th>May 1</th>
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<th>Jun. 1</th>
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Transplants: ●
Planting seeds: ●
Estimated planting dates: ●
Possible with protection: ●
Next year crop: ●
SOWING THE SEEDS
- Fill the prepared containers with top quality seed starting planting media
- Moisten the media
- Plant as suggested on seed packet (3 times seed diameter)
- Cover containers with plastic wrap or dome and place in tray without drainage (to keep furniture surface dry)
- Place on seedling heat mat to speed germination
- Day temperature should be in the 60-80°F range
- Night temperature should be in the 55-70°F range

WHEN THE SEED GERMINATES
- Remove the plastic covering
- Remove from seedling heat mat
- Place under grow lights (a windowsill does NOT provide adequate light)
- Adjust lights 1-2” above plant foliage as they grow
- Provide light 12 to 14 hours daily
- Monitor the soil and provide consistent moisture ONLY as needed
- Fertilize after true leaves emerge

THIN THE PLANTS
- Thin crowded plants (after at least one set of true leaves emerge)
- Cut plants to be removed with small scissors at the soil line

TRANSPLANT THE SEEDLINGS INTO INDIVIDUAL POTS
- Carefully separate seedlings with a spoon or knife
- Handle seedlings by their leaves, not the stem
- Replant with root below soil mix, stem above

ACCLIMATE/HARDEN OFF PLANTS
- When plants have four to six true leaves
- Gradually increase outdoor exposure over a 2-week interval
- Transplant mature seedlings into the garden when soils are in the 65-70°F temperature range

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- Easy to Make Grow Light Stand from K-State Research and Extension: tinyurl.com/pvclightstandvideo
- Grow Your Own Transplants at Home: tinyurl.com/growyourowntransplants
- Suggested Vegetable Planting Dates for the Wasatch Front: tinyurl.com/suggestedplantingdates
- How to Start Seeds Indoors: tinyurl.com/howtostartseedsindoors
- Starting Seeds Indoors from University of Maryland Extension: tinyurl.com/wppshd2