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Easy Steps to Sow Seeds

by

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As I explained in the blog post, seed sowing is a wonderful way of growing new plants, saving money and also choosing exactly which plants you want to grow and enjoy.

Read through the article and watch my short video to gather extra info for this simple, yet super effective method to grow new plants...and food!!

Ready to get started?? Have all your equipment ready to go.

You'll need -

- quality seed raising/growing mix - this is a soil blend suitable for seed growing.
- plastic pots, punnets or small recycled containers - I'll show a few examples in video!
- a selection of seeds - choose plants that are suitable for your climate and growing in the current season.
- plant labels - small plastic labels or re-use cut up plastic milk cartons or bottles.
- a permanent marker - to write on labels.
- hand water sprayer - adds moisture to seeds.
- seedling tray lined with damp newspaper to store punnets and pots in.

I sometimes use a cover over the punnets to create a warm and moist climate for seeds to germinate in. It also protects the seeds from rats and other little critters. You'll find these at hardware stores and garden centres. They're helpful, but not essential.

TIP - *Use a high quality seed raising/growing mix, which can be purchased from hardware stores and garden centres (try to find organic options) or try making your own using 8 parts sand, 1 part peat moss or coco fibre and nutrients (small amount of blood and bone or crushed manure pellets).*

There's many options for containers to sow into including plastic punnets (4, 6 or 8 cells), small tube stock pots, jiffy pots, coco pellets, recycled containers, eg yoghurt containers, egg cartons, toilet rolls, or old plastic drink bottles (add drainage holes).

TIP - If re-using plastic punnets or pots wash well before use in warm water, with natural cleaner, to ensure they are free of any bacteria or diseases

Have your seeds ready (make sure they're suitable for the current season) and read the packets for growing information.

To germinate (or sprout) all seeds require warmth, moisture, oxygen and some also require other factors to overcome dormancy, eg water, fire, stomach acids/partial digestion by animals/birds, time, temperature change, harsh scratching. The seed packet will have any special instructions to follow for this.

If the seeds need to be soaked overnight you will need to arrange this the day before sowing...

Steps to Sow...

1. **place punnets/pots on a seedling tray** or other flat surface, eg potting bench or outdoor table
2. **fill punnets or pots with seed growing mix**, to almost the top of punnet pot. Gently pat down mixture, not too firm

If mixture is dry then spray lightly with water.

3. **have a look** at the different seeds as all seeds vary in size, shape and colour. Large seeds can be sown into a larger pot or directly into the ground.

TIP - *Fine seeds can be mixed with a small amount of seed raising mix in a small container. This mix is then sprinkled over the filled pots, using your fingers, as the sowing method.

*Medium seeds will be placed directly into the filled pots. Usually one seed per pot/cell is enough as you don't want to overcrowd the seedlings.

4. **use a small stick** (toothpicks work well) to make a small hole in the growing mix slightly larger than the seed.
5. **the seed is to be sown** into growing mix the same depth as the seed width, eg for a seed 2mm in size, sow the seed 2mm deep into mix.
6. **place seed** into the hole and gently cover the seed with a small amount of growing mix.
7. **use labels for each seed type sown**, record how many punnets or pots of each one and the date they were sown. This helps to keep track of the time frame for germinating.
8. **water seeds** using a hand water sprayer - it's important not to disturb the seeds once sown.

*By spraying a fine mist of water you're adding enough moisture for the soil to absorb without drowning the seed.

TIP - Only use water at this stage as seeds contain nutrients to germinate and grow to the first 2 leaves.

DO NOT MULCH OVER SEEDS! (this prevents seeds from germinating)

9. if you're using a propagating cover place this over the seedling tray.
10. **place the tray in a shaded and warm location.** Some examples of this are in a greenhouse/ shadehouse, under the shade of a tree, on a windowsill or on a patio/verandah within close reach.
11. **keep the growing mix damp**, not soaking, so keep the trays in a location for easy access.

TIP - If not using a cover you may need to spray trays morning and afternoon. This is something that you will have to monitor during the germination period.

The time between sowing the seeds and germination will vary, usually between 4-10 days.

Read of all instructions and information provided with the seeds to understand germination time.

Once seedlings appear and have the first small leaves add a small amount of liquid fertiliser to the water sprayer. I suggest an organic product, eg seaweed solution, worm juice, comfrey or compost tea, but only a very weak mixture.

TIP - Spray the leaves and growing mix daily with this mixture to help the plants to grow strong and ready for transplanting into the garden.

The seedlings (baby plants) will be ready for transplanting into your garden or larger pots when they have about 6 or more leaves and are strong and healthy looking.

I hope you try these methods for sowing seeds and have much success with your new plants.

This is a fun and rewarding way of teaching children how to grow as well, so get the kids to help you with this and soon you'll have many plants to enjoy!!

If you have any questions please post a comment and images to our Soil to Supper Facebook Club (www.facebook.com/groups/soiltosupperclub) and I'll assistance to you. Also join in on daily themes, plus loads of other info to learn and grow!

I would love to know if this method has helped your garden, so please comment in the Facebook Club or email me anytime (cath@soiltosupper.com)

Growing with you,

Cath

It is recommended to use personal protective equipment when undertaking all gardening activities and Soil to Supper is not held responsible for gardeners not adhering to safety requirements while gardening and completing these suggested activities.