



# Starting Seed Indoors

Some seeds should be started indoors because plants grow slowly, or the growing season outside is not long enough to allow them to mature.

Burpee offers many products to help you grow seeds successfully indoors. See our full selection of seed starting accessories at [Burpee.com](https://www.burpee.com)

**Select a container:** Use a seed starting kit or fiber pot in a tray where the water can drain.

**Select a soil:** Use a seed starting mix or pellets, as this type of soil is sterile and designed to drain well yet stay moist. Pre-moisten the mix before sowing, making sure it is evenly moist.

**Plant:** Referencing the seed packet, sow 2-3 seeds per container, to the recommended depth. Tamp the soil down lightly and mist with a spray bottle. The ideal soil temperature for germination is about 70-80°F for most seeds. At this time light is not necessary.

**Cover:** Lightly and loosely set a transparent cover over the newly seeded container to keep the soil moist. Remove the cover when 50% of the seeds have germinated.

**Apply light:** As soon as the seedlings emerge, place containers in a sunny window that gets at least six to eight hours of sun daily (remember winter days are shorter!), or use grow lights set 3" above the growing plants. Grow lights should be on 16 hours/day and off 8 hours/day. Grow lights are the most reliable source of light for growing seedlings as cloudy weather can cause seedlings to stretch for light indoors.

**Thin:** Thin to one plant per cell or pot when seedlings have two sets of true leaves. Snip the weaker seedling at the soil line with scissors. This prevents over crowding.

**Fertilize:** Once seedlings have several true leaves, apply a liquid fertilizer at about ¼ strength of the directions.

When it is time to transplant your seedlings outside, condition them first to the outdoor environment. This is called "hardening off".

- Move your seedlings outside to a sheltered location in partial shade during the warmest part of the day.
- Bring them to a sheltered location outside each evening.

- Move them for a few more hours each day to the location where they will be planted. On days 6 and 7 the plants are ready to be transplanted.

**Note:** If frost is expected, bring the plants inside.

*Save your seed packets as a reference for the variety description and harvesting information.*

## Sowing Directly in your Garden



Seeds that should be sown directly in the garden are either easy to start outside, mature quickly, or do not transplant well because of a fragile or tap root structure.

**Plan your garden:** Choose the proper site for the plants you are growing with the enough sun or shade and good soil drainage.

**Prepare the soil:** Remove weeds and work organic matter into the top 6-8" of soil; then level and smooth.

**Plant:** Seeds may be planted in rows, mounds, or scattered, depending on seed type and your garden design. This information may be found on the seed packet and at [Burpee.com](https://www.burpee.com). Gently cover seed with the recommended amount of soil and tamp down. Sow at least two seeds where you want a plant to grow, and then thin to the strongest seedling:

- **To plant in rows:** Dig a shallow furrow and distribute seeds evenly at the recommended spacing.
- **To plant in mounds:** Hill up the soil and plant three or four seeds around the center. Space mounds according to the recommendation on the seed packet.
- **To use the scatter method:** Prepare the bed and scatter seeds where you want them to grow.

**Water:** Gently water after sowing. Always keep newly sown seeds moist but not too wet.

**Thin:** Once seedlings have two sets of leaves, thin to the distance recommended on the seed packet. Snip the weaker seedling at the soil line with scissors.



### Additional Tips for Direct Sowing:

- Label your plant rows or area at the time of planting.
- When sowing in containers, use potting soil rather than garden soil.