

Getting Started



Grow • Eat • Share

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Before you get your hands dirty, it's important to know the materials and methods you will be working with. This *Getting Started* brochure will start you off...

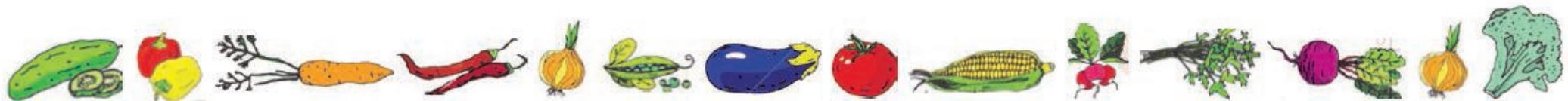
Planting Your Seeds at Home

1. Find a place to plant your seeds. Most vegetables require 6 to 8 hours of full sun.
2. Remove all weeds, rocks, and debris. Break up large dirt clods in the top 6 to 10 inches of soil.
3. Layer 2 to 4 inches of compost on top of the soil and dig it into the top foot of the soil.
4. Fertilizer can be added as the seedbed is prepared. Follow the instructions on the fertilizer package.
5. Plant seeds at their correct depth and distance apart.
6. Keep soil damp until at least 2 weeks after seeds sprout. As a general rule, add water when the top 1 to 2 inches of soil has dried out.
7. Water regularly.

How to Borrow Seeds



1. **First-time user:** Fill out a [*Seed Lending Library Membership Form*](#).
2. Come to the library and look in the seed catalog and select the seeds you want:
 - A. Use a *Seed Catalog Place Holder* to mark where you remove a seed packet.
 - B. Pour a few seeds from the seed packet into an envelope to take home with you. **Take only the number of seeds you will use—2 or 3 seeds for each plant you want to grow.**
 - C. **Label your take home envelopes** with the plant name and variety.
 - D. Return the seed packet to the same place you took it from.
3. Complete the *Seed Lending Borrowing Form* each time you take seeds from the seed catalog.
4. Take the *Getting Started* and [*How to Save Seeds*](#) brochures to learn more about planting your seeds at home and saving seeds from your harvest.



GARDEN GLOSSARY:

Annual: plant that grows, blooms, makes seeds and dies in one year.

Biennial: plant that grows the first year, and in the second year blooms, makes seeds and dies.



Bloom of a cucumber plant

Bloom: flower.

Chaff: dry part of seed pod around the seeds.

Common name: what a plant is called, such as “beets.” For

vegetables, the common name usually identifies a plant well enough for gardeners.

Compost: a natural soil amendment mixed into soil to help plants grow.

Cross-pollinate: pollen from one flower is brought to another flower to make seeds.

Crown: where the roots and stem of a plant come together just above soil surface.

Dry seed: seed collected from dry flowers.

Families of plants: plants in the same family are closely related and have similar flowers, pollination, growth requirements and diseases. Example: tomatoes are in the Nightshade family; so are peppers.

Ferment: wet seeds in pulp and water are kept warm until they bubble; improves germination of these seeds.

Fertilizer: nutrients to help plants grow.

Full sun: at least six hours of sunlight every day.

Germination: a baby plant begins to grow from a seed.

Hybrid seeds (also called F1 or VF): used to grow a particular variety of plant, but the seeds from these plants will not grow plants like the parent plant.

Isolation: prevention of unwanted cross-pollination.

Mulch: material placed on top of soil to prevent weeds and slow down how fast soil dries. Examples: bark, stones.

Partial sun: three to four hours of sunlight every day.

Perennial: plant which grows, blooms, makes seeds, and lives for several years.

Pollen: yellow or orange powder found in flowers; needed to make seeds. Like sperm in animals.

Pollination: male pollen touches a female flower part to make seeds. Like fertilization in animals.

Pollinators: insects, birds and wind move pollen from one flower to another.

Pulp: soft wet insides of some vegetables. Example: squash.

Scientific name: what plant scientists call a plant. The scientific name for beets is *Beta vulgaris*. Scientific names are helpful for identifying flowers and uncommon plants.



Germination of a bean plant

Sometimes very different plants have the same common name. Other plants don't have a common name.

Seed: contains a baby plant and food for the baby plant.

Seed head, seed pod, or husk: dried part of dead flower that contains seeds.

Seedling or sprout: baby plant that has recently germinated.

Seed leaves: the first leaves on a baby plant; used to help identify seedlings. Later leaves are called true leaves.

Self-pollinate: a flower uses its own pollen to make seeds.

Soil: earth; contains very tiny bits of rocks, sand, and decayed

organic material (dead plants and animals).

Soil amendment: material added to improve soil. Examples: compost and fertilizer.

Sow: to plant seeds.

Variety or cultivar: the exact type of plant, such as “Golden” beets or “Chiogga” beets. Variety is VERY important for labeling vegetable seeds!

Wet seed: seed grows in the wet pulp of some vegetables. Example: pumpkin.



Most tomato plants are self-pollinating

