

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Direct sow seeds

Although some gardeners like to plant seed early inside to get a head start in the colder months, some seeds are better directly sown into the garden, or maybe the gardener missed their window to start the seeds indoors. Either way, there are certain steps to follow when direct sowing seeds right into the garden soil.

Reasons to direct sow:

Although starting early indoors is a great way to get started in the season early, direct sowing seeds at the right time straight into the garden requires no special lighting equipment or potting. It also eliminates the risk of transplant shock when you move your early-started seeds from indoors to outside. Direct sowing into the garden places the seeds in the exact spot it'll spend its entire life. However, specific plants that prefer warm to hot weather and a longer growing season are better off started indoors, such as peppers, tomatoes and eggplants. Also, plants that require specific germination requirements should be started indoors and not direct sown.

Other than those specific instances, direct sowing is an excellent practice and is easily done for the majority of vegetables, annual flowers and herbs.

How to reap success with direct sowing:

When direct sowing into the garden, it's best to start with loose, weed-free soil. Prep the area prior to planting by removing any clumps, stones, sticks or weeds. Loosen the



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soil with a garden fork to make it more suitable for seeds to grow. Also, by adding compost or organic fertilizer into the soil, it can help provide the right nutrients the seeds need to grow.

Seeds call for different instructions, so be sure to follow seed packet instructions when it comes to exact depth and spacing between seeds for planting. The seed packet also should tell you when exactly to plant the seeds outside. It is also important to take note if your seeds require light for germination or not. If they do, they will need to be laid across the top of the soil and not buried, otherwise they won't sprout. Use a gentle shower setting on your hose to water the seeds after planting, because if the hose is too strong, it'll wash the seeds away.

Another big tip is to mark where you planted your seeds. This way you won't walk all over them when traipsing around your garden,



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and you'll also be able to keep an eye on them when the seeds germinate.

Be sure to educate yourself on what specific seedlings will look like once they sprout. you don't want to accidentally weed your seedlings if you mistake the seedling for weeds, but you also don't want the weeds to overtake the seedlings.

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