

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

What went wrong: Spindly plants

Spindly plants, also known as leggy plants, is a condition in which a seedling is growing tall but its stem is too thin to support the plant. Although annoying, spindly plants are easy to correct, which is good news for gardeners who may struggle with the problem. Some other symptoms include the plant drooping since the stem cannot support it, the plant appearing pale and lacking a lush, green appearance and the stems are long and thin.

What causes spindly plants:

A main cause to spindly plants is because the plant isn't receiving enough sunlight. Many times, even when you start vegetables from seed, they need sunlight all day long to grow correctly. Even if you have placed your seedlings near a window, they probably still aren't getting the correct amount of sunlight each day.

Sometimes, plants become spindly because they are too crowded. This can lead to the plants shading each other and therefore lead to lack of light. Seedlings placed in the same tray or pot also compete for nutrients, which can lead to poor growth and underdeveloped stems and leaves.

Other causes include growing seedlings in conditions that are too warm, overfertilizing and more.

How to cure spindly plants:

The first step to solving your spindly plant problem is to determine what the cause is. If the problem is coming from the common lack



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of light cause, the easiest way to cure spindly plants is to make sure they are getting more sunlight. Do this by moving the plant's pot from window to window throughout the day to be sure you follow the sun's path. If you are not at home or don't have the time to do this, move your seedlings outside during the day if the weather is warm enough. A grow light can be used to solve the problem as well. Make sure the light is 6 inches away from the plants and keep the light on at night and off during the day, when you can put the seedling near a sunny window.

To counteract crowding, make sure you are transplanting your seedlings outside into their own area at the right time, which is before they get too big and begin to crowd each other. Make sure you only have a few sturdy seedlings in each pot or tray instead of too many crowded ones.

Research whichever plant you are growing to be sure you can transplant it outdoors at



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the right time since transplant time varies per plant.

To combat an overfertilizing problem, be sure to use 15-15-15 fertilizer which is then diluted to half-strength every three weeks after the plants germinate. Once you move them outdoors, you can begin to fertilize with a balanced formula every couple of weeks.

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