Spring Planting

Great Time To Discuss The Growing Cycle With Your Children

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY SHOULD YOU START SEEDS INDOORS?

**Starting seeds indoors gives your crops a head start on the growing season and the chance to grow in a stable, controlled environment.** Outdoors, the unpredictability of rain, drought, low and high temperatures, sunlight, and [pests and diseases](https://www.almanac.com/gardening/pests-and-diseases) can take a toll on young plants, especially when they're just getting started. Indoors, you can control these elements to maximize your plants' growth and give them the best shot at thriving when they are eventually transplanted outdoors. In regions with a short growing season, starting seeds indoors lets you get a jump on the season and have more time to grow, resulting in a greater harvest.

**A lot of seeds can be started indoors, but some are better off being sown directly into the garden.** Some crops, such as root vegetables, do not transplant well and should be started outdoors. Tomatoes and peppers, on the other hand, can tolerate being transplanted and are typically started indoors. Consult our table, below, to see where other crops are commonly started.

**Whether you start seeds indoors or outdoors also depends on the length of your growing season, as well as your climate.**In cool regions with shorter growing seasons, most seeds should be started indoors, as they need to get a head start on the growing season and should be protected from potentially-freezing spring temperatures. In warm regions with longer growing seasons, more seeds can be started outdoors, as they don't need as much of a head start on the season and are not in danger of being killed by a spring frost.

WHEN SHOULD YOU START SEEDS INDOORS?

**For most crops, you should start seeds indoors about 6–8 weeks before your last spring frost date. See the attached plating calendar which has the last frost date.** This gives the plants plenty of time to grow large and healthy enough to survive their eventual transplanting to the garden. Consult our Planting Calendar to see the best time to start seeds in your area.

WHEN SHOULD YOU TRANSPLANT SEEDLINGS?

**When seedlings have grown too large for their seed trays or starter pots, it's time to transplant.** If it's not yet warm enough to plant outdoors, transplant the seedlings to larger plastic or peat pots indoors and continue care. If outdoor conditions allow, start [hardening off](https://www.almanac.com/video/how-successfully-harden-indoor-sown-plants) your seedlings approximately one week before your last frost date, then transplant them into the garden.