

GROWING HEALTHY SEEDLINGS INDOORS

GARFIELD PARK
CONSERVATORY
ALLIANCE 

TEMPERATURE

Seeds need a constant bottom heat of 70-85F until seeds sprout. Use:

- Top of fridge
- Seedling heat mat
- Heating pad or electric blanket



After seedlings emerge bottom heat is no longer needed but seedling tray should be located in a room with average room temperature of 65-75 F

AIR CIRCULATION

Expose plants to an indirect breeze:

- Fans
- Windows just cracked open

Benefits include general plant health and increased stem strength.



WATER

Before sprouting:

- Provide consistent moisture with a wrung out sponge.
- Keep seedling tray covered.
- Use a spray bottle for gentle watering.



After sprouting:

- Uncover tray to prevent excessive moisture.
- Switch to watering can.
- Or water from below (dunk the tray in a sink filled with a bit of water).

Always water the soil (not the leaves) to prevent water-borne fungal or bacterial diseases.

LIGHT

Required once seedlings sprout.

Use both natural sunlight and supplemental light. Seedlings do best if they receive at least 12 hours of light per day until they can be planted outdoors. Even seedlings near a south or west facing window, should receive supplemental lighting:

- South or West facing window for full sun (6+ hours of sunlight per day)
- East facing window for part sun/shade (minimum 4 hours of sunlight per day)
- Supplemental grow lights: CFL or LED, daylight or warm spectrum preferred
- Keep light close to the tops of the seedlings but leaves should not touch the light fixture.



TRANSPLANTING

Seedlings should have 1-2 sets of true leaves before moving to a larger pot or planting outdoors.



Before planting seedlings outdoors, they must be hardened off:

- Start with 2 hours in outdoor sheltered location
- Increase 1-2 hours per day, gradually increasing exposure to wind and sunlight until seedlings withstand 8 hours outdoors

Required Soil Temperature:

- 50-55F for cool season crops (brassicas, legumes, leafy greens, roots)
- 60-75F for warm season crops (tomatoes, peppers, basil)

When transplanting your seedlings to a larger container or directly into the ground:

- Remove newspaper bottom from the paper roll
- Plant the entire paper roll planter so that it is even with the new soil level. The paper roll will break down over time.

FERTILIZER

Seedlings will produce their own food via photosynthesis if they have sufficient water and light, adequate air flow and a standard room temperature of 65-75 F. Only use fertilizer if your seedlings show the following signs of stress:

- Yellow leaves
- Drooping or curled leaves

Fertilizers to use:

- Organic, water soluble with equal NPK (nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium)
- Weak coffee or tea (diluted with equal amount of water)
- Compost tea (search for recipes online)

