



Starting Seeds Indoors

Why start seeds indoors?

- Plants may require a long growing season.
- Larger and hearty plants and roots will transplant outside easier.
- Fine seeds started indoors will be protected from harsh weather conditions.
- Economical, satisfying and enjoyable.
- Great way to teach children about growing plants and food.

On the back of each seed packet is important information regarding growing needs, proper planting time and how to sow. Wichita's average last frost date is about April 15th. This will allow for working backwards as to when to sow.

Here's what you'll need:

Seed Selection: Start with some of your favorite plants.

Location: Where will you care for your seedlings indoors and is there good light? Where will you plant the items outdoors once they are ready - in containers or in the ground?

Soil: Use a seed starting mix (**ferti • lome Seed & Cutting**, peat pellets or **Happy Frog Potting Soil**) to fill your container or seed trays. Wet the soil prior to planting 2 to 3 seeds per container.

Watering: Water seed containers from the bottom of the tray or lightly mist daily to prevent dislodging the seeds. A humidity dome will keep the soil from drying out. Seeds like to remain moist while germinating. Later, emerged seedlings may be uncovered and watered when the soil surface is dry.

Temperature: A heating source will keep the soil warm overnight. Optimal temperature between 65-75 degrees will help germination. Warm soil encourages strong root growth.

Light: With good light, germination should occur in 7-10 days. When the new seedlings are visible remove the dome to let them receive more light (10-12 hours/day) to keep them from becoming spindly. Grow lights with red & blue wavelength lights are the best for germination. Start the light 3-4" above the soil and raise as the seedlings grow. If utilizing natural light be sure to rotate plants to get even growing.

Transplanting: After the first set of true leaves emerge, a mild dose fertilizer such as low nitrogen and high phosphorus **ferti • lome Blooming & Rooting** or **Tiger Bloom** will develop strong roots and blooms. Once the second set of true leaves develop the plants are ready to transplant. If 2 or 3 plants all emerge in the same pot, remove the weaker plants using scissors so you don't disturb roots. The seedlings will need to harden off by placing them outside for longer periods of time each day before permanently planting outside.

**** Remember to read the back of each seed packet for special care instructions. ****