

# STARTING SEEDS MADE EASY

## Basic Requirements:

- Soilless Mix: peat, vermiculite, perlite mix
- Sterile containers to sow the seeds into (recycled containers can be rinsed in a mild bleach solution)
- Labels and pencil or waterproof marker
- No Damp or organic fungicide preventer
- Warm place to start seeds
- Containers to transplant into approximately 2 in or 5 cm in size. For seedlings that have roots that do not like to be disturbed, peat pots can serve as both the germinating and growing container
- Sufficient light for transplanted seedlings
- A fan to keep the air moving

## Planting Your Seeds:

- Moisten your soilless mix using very warm or hot water, stir until thoroughly moist (but not wet)
- Fill your containers, do not pack soil down (tapping container on the table is enough to settle medium)
- Saturate soil with No Damp or sprinkle cinnamon on the top of your sown seeds
- Read your seed package and plant according to instructions. If the seeds need light to germinate do not cover - just lightly press into the soil. If they need dark to germinate then cover with a small sprinkling of soil. Some seeds may need to be soaked in warm water overnight, may need stratification (exposure to a cold moist period) or sanding or scoring of the seed to assist germination
- Spray the top of your newly planted containers with room temperature water. Do not use a watering can
- Cover container with a plastic lid, saran wrap or anything that will keep the moisture in. If your seeds need light to germinate make sure the cover is clear, if dark, cover with anything that blocks light
- Label your containers – all seedlings look the same or very similar when they germinate
- Place in a consistently warm place 70-80F/21-27C. Direct bright light is not necessary yet
- Check your seeds daily making sure they are not too dry or too wet. If the soil looks too damp leave the lid off for a little while. If it appears dry spray room temperature water on top of the soil and put the lid back on
- As soon as your seed leaf (cotyledon) is up take the lid off and place in bright light

## Caring for Your Seedlings:

- Transplant to a larger container usually 2 in/5cm (hold the seedling by the leaves to avoid damaging the stem)
- Place in a sunny window (south is usually the brightest) or under fluorescent lights (keeping the lights about 2 to 4 inches above plants) for 12-16 hours daily. Rotate your containers frequently to prevent stretching
- Keep temperature cooler than for seed starting 21C/71F in daytime and 15-18C/65F at night
- Bottom water until seedlings are strong enough to withstand being sprinkled on

- Have a fan running to help strengthen your seedlings and provide adequate ventilation
- Fertilize when you have 2 true leaves. Use a balanced 20-20-20 fertilizer or one with a high middle number – it is the one that promotes root growth. Dilute the fertilizer - start with ¼ to ½ strength
- 7 to 10 days, before the last frost, harden off young plants by placing them outside gradually exposing them to the wind and brighter light
- Transplant outside when all danger of frost is over

## **Recommended Books**

“The Gardener's A-Z Guide to Growing Flowers from Seed to Bloom”

Author: Eileen Powell

ISBN: 978-1580175173

“Gardening with Short Growing Seasons”

Author: Graham Saunders

ISBN: 978-09812492-0-9