

# Operation Headstart: Sow Your Seeds Indoors

If you want to get a head start on Spring—and save some money, too—start some seeds indoors in a sunny window. By the time the weather is warm you will have nice little plants ready to set out in the garden.

Seeds of most tender vegetables and flowers should be planted about six weeks before the plants are to be set out. If you want to plant around Memorial Day—a safe time in this area—start the seeds by mid-April.

Some plants are slower growing and require 10 weeks before they are ready to set out. Included in this group are petunias, snapdragons, verbena and lobelias. Start them in mid-March. Vegetables to start early include tomatoes, peppers and eggplant.

The plants can be grown in peat-pots, peat pellets, in ordinary clay flower pots or in a variety of improvised containers. You can use milk cartons, cottage cheese or margarine containers, or a foil-lined shoe box. Make holes in the bottom for drainage.

Fill the containers to within 1/2-inch of the top with potting soil that you have purchased, or garden soil that you have either sterilized by heating in a 200 degree oven for 20 minutes, or in a kettle with boiling water for half an hour. Vermiculite is used by professional growers because it is sterile and light weight, but it provides no nutrients for plants.

**WATER THE SOIL** thoroughly then sprinkle the seeds on top. If seeds are large cover them with a bit

of soil or vermiculite. If they are tiny leave them uncovered.

Cover the container with plastic film to hold in the moisture and then cover with a piece of newspaper or a saucer to keep the light out. Put the container in a warm place since most seeds germinate best at a temperature of 60 degrees to 70 degrees.

Check the seeds in a couple of days and remove the cover when they begin to sprout. Put them in a bright, sunny window or under fluorescent plant lights. Turn the pots frequently to keep the plants growing straight. They tend to lean toward the light, and will get leggy if there is not sufficient light.

The first leaves to appear are "seed leaves." Soon the true leaves sprout. After the first or second pair of true leaves have appeared, thin the plants or transplant them so they will not be crowded.

**BEFORE THE PLANTS** are planted outdoors in the garden they should be "hardened off." This is a process that gets them conditioned to the outdoor climate.

Put the pots outside during the warm part of the day. Start with an hour the first day and gradually increase the time. After a week or 10 days leave them overnight in a protected place if frost is not expected.

Incidentally, the seeds in even one packet will produce a great many little plants—so plan accordingly and don't attempt more than you have space for.

## Bring In The New For Spring Planting

Are you looking for something new and different to try in your garden this year?

Among the new vegetables being introduced this year, is a green pea called green arrow that produces long slender pods with 10 or more peas in each pod. They are reported to be sweet and flavorful.

There is a new leaf lettuce called Green Ice. It is a leaf lettuce with a crisp texture and a deep green color that picks up salads. It is reported to

be one of the slowest varieties to go to seed so it keeps producing its crisp leaves for a long time.

There is also a new aster called Totem Pole. It is reported to be easy to grow from seed. The plants are about two feet tall, with about eight or 10 stems bearing flowers six inches in diameter. Colors are beautiful pinks and purples ranging from soft pastels to deep hues.

**ZUCCHINI SQUASH** is normally green, but Burpee Seed Company has introduced a golden-zucchini. The glossy, cylindrical fruits are bright golden yellow—but with typical zucchini flavor. The plants are of a compact "bush" habit that doesn't take up too much space in the garden.

Look also for the little pumpkin called Lady Godiva. It is reported to produce seeds that are naked, so they are ready for nibbling without having to be shelled.

Among the new flower offerings are marigold Oryland which, has single daisy-type flowers nearly three inches in diameter. The petals have ruffled edges and come in shades of pale primrose yellow, gold or orange. The plants are about 15 inches high.



Burpee's Golden Zucchini

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