Starting seeds? Now's the time

Raising plants from seed is interesting. In our area the first week in March is the time to begin 6-8 weeks prior to the last spring frost. Seeds store food and the embryo of a new plant. Seeds store seed companies will produce the plant you want. If you collect your own, the flower fruit may revert back to the parent plant, be fruit may revert back to the parent plant, be such as acorns and muster color. Some seeds such as acorns and muster color. Some seeds such as acorns and may sprouting until the correct "nature" time. This is why plants need a domancy period — to let the seeds prepare for another growth.

other growth.

A container for starting seeds can be anything from a coffee can, wooden box, cottage cheese container or commercial flats. There are many seed starting kits on the market. If you use a container without drainage holes, put some gravel in the bottom and cover it with a piece of paper towelling. The containers should be at least 24 to 3 inches deep and can be deeper. The shallower the container, the more water needed.

There is no set rule for preparing the potting mix. Experiment until you get a blend that you like. You might want to try equal parts of vermiculite, milled spaghnum and perlite or potting soil, a little vermiculite and some peat. There are also commercial seed starting mixes that are good

in any case, the soil should be put to nearly the top of the container. Water and drain this soil two hours before planting. And don't plant the seeds too thick. Follow package directions. Some need

GOOD GARDEN TIP: If you have over-wintered poited geraniums, cut them back to six to eight inches so they will be more busby in the coming months. Also, more flowers will result; set them in full sun, when danger of frost is past, don't over-fertilize.

to be covered with the soil and others just pressed

to be covered with the soil and others just pressed into it.

If you use a container with drainage holes you can water from below, if not use a very fine mist, you don't want to wash the seeds into a corner. A baster is good for watering. Follow package directions as to water temperature.

Now cover the flat with plastic, making sure it does not touch the soil. Water often enough so the soil doesn't dry out. Keep the container of seeds out of direct sunlight, but in high light, filtered sun is ok. After germination (when the first little leaves begin to show), remove the cover and put in a stronger light for two to three days and then into full sun.

If the seedlings are in a window, turn the pan occasionally so they will grow straight. If you use florescent lights, put the flats 3-5 inches below and don't let the folinge touch the lights. The light should remain on 10-12 hours each day.

AFTER TILE second set of leaves appear (the true leaves), repot the seedlings into clay or peat pois. Melsten he soil thoroughly before this and let it drain a lew hours, being sure the soil is moist to the bottom of the container. You can use

down to earth

Marty

Figley

Figley

a packaged potting mix with a little vermiculite, peat or both If you use a good soil mix, there is no need to fertilite now. If you use a sterile potting soil, fertilize with 's soiltion.

Before moving the plants to the garden harden them off by putting them in a protected area outdoors, the side of the house, on a porch or a partially shaded area. They need to be exposed gradually to the outdoor weather and light conditions, which may take a week. If the weather turns chility bring them back into the house.

If you have no room in your home to repot to larger containers, thin the plants in the flat so that a space of one inch is between them and fertilitze with a '4' solution weekly.

Handle the transplants carefully as the roots are very tender. Try using a mason's trowel. The seedings are hardned off and have the specific produced in the product of the seedings are hardned off and have the specific produced in the product of the seedings are hardned off and have the specific produced in the product of th

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shilowest assists the release with job place-ment.

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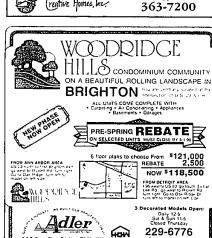
For application forms contact Arts Midwest at 528 Hennepin Avenue, Suite 310, Minneapolis, Minn. 55403. For information, contact Arts Midwest staff members Janis Lane-Ewart or David Fraher at (612) 341-075.

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