



## Roundtable Discussion: Starting Seeds

### General Tips:

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- Plan ahead! Read planting instructions on each seed packet, to ensure sufficient time for seed conditioning and germination.
- Press soil firmly into pots so that planting depth is accurately measured, and so that tender burgeoning roots do not dry out
- Water consistently: don't let soil dry out or become waterlogged
- Avoid starting seeds in drafty locations, as inconsistent temperatures may impede germination. Most seeds require warmth and/or sunlight to germinate.

### Pre-planting Conditioning and Strategies:

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**Inoculant:** legumes require a rhizobium inoculum to facilitate nitrogen fixing.

**Scarification:** some seeds need to have their surface nicked to germinate.

**Stratification:** certain seeds require a period of cold exposure in order to germinate. Seed packet will indicate if this is necessary, and how long to condition the seeds. (i.e. coreopsis, monarda)

**Warm water soak:** some seeds will germinate faster if soaked in warm water for a short period of time just before planting (i.e. legumes)

### Planting Conditions and Considerations:

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**Direct planting:** some seedlings don't recover from shock if transplanted, and should be planted directly in the location where you intend them to grow. Potting soil isn't necessary, but prepare the spot by removing large twigs and leaves that will impede root growth or access to sunlight.

**Potting soil:** always start seeds in new potting soil, to avoid contaminants or disease that burgeoning seeds will be especially susceptible to, and to provide nutrients to support seed germination and growth

**Hardening off:** after babying young seedlings in a warm and sunny location inside, they'll need to acclimate slowly to outside temperatures. As the outside temperature increases and as you get closer to planting time, place plants in warm midday sun and take inside before the evening temperature becomes chilly. This will prevent shock to the seedlings when they are planted. Gradually increase the amount of time the seedlings remain outside, to toughen them before planting

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