

STARTING SEEDS

WHAT YOU NEED

- ◆ Plastic Tray or Aluminum Cake Pan
- ◆ Peat Pellets
- ◆ Warm Water
- ◆ Seeds
- ◆ Popsicle Sticks or Plant Stakes



1. Put the plastic tray or cake pan on a flat surface. Put peat pellets in the tray so they fit side by side, but do not overlap. If you look closely at the pellets, you will see a bottom and a top, with a circle and a dot in the center. The top goes up. Add enough warm water to cover the pellets, filling the container about two-thirds full. First, they will look small like Oreo cookies. They will swell, getting fatter and wetter. In about 2 to 10 minutes they will be done depending on how warm the water is. They will be 2 to 3 inches tall, soft and plump, with a hole in the top. If the pellets aren't all the way open, add some more water. If there is leftover water in the container, pour out the extra water.
2. Write the name of each kind of seed onto a plant label and push the label down in the pellet at the outside of the hole for each pellet.
3. Carefully open the packet of seeds and push two to four seeds down into the pellet until they are partly buried in the peat moss.
4. Cover the tray or pan with a plastic cover such as saran wrap or a plastic mold, but do not secure it tight. You want to let air movement into the tray, but still hold enough moisture to help germinate the seeds. If you can see water beads on the inside of the container it is a good sign.
5. Put the tray inside the house in a bright, warm window. Each day take the cover off the tray and look at the plants. In seven to ten days you will see little sprouts growing. Once they are as tall as the top of the container, take the cover off. Check them with water every day or every few days. Watch them carefully, they are baby plants and need to be taken care of.



6. Leave your baby plants in the tray for no more than two to three weeks or else they will get long and leggy. You can plant your baby plants outside in the ground after the last chance of frost. For Nebraska, that date is around May 15th. After planting them outside in the ground or in a pot, fertilize them. Now you are off to a great start on your garden!