



~ How to Plant Seeds Outside ~

How do we ensure our seeds will germinate successfully?

Background

Spring is here, and, depending on where you live, the danger of a hard frost may have passed by now. After taking into consideration your [crop sequences](#) and successions of crops within the season, it is time to start planting the garden out. While selecting which seeds to plant and when to plant them may require good foresight and planning, planting the seeds themselves is simple with just a few simple rules to abide by. In this lesson, students will learn how to interpret seeding instructions on a seed package and apply them.



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to ...

-  Start plants from seed
-  Understand what to look for on a seed package

Academic Vocabulary

seed /sēd/ *noun*. - the reproductive structure in plants that begins the life cycle of the next generation

Directions

1. **Gather your materials.** You will need the following supplies:

Seed package · a trowel (or bare hands) · ruler or measuring tape (optional)
2. **Watch [this Youtube video](#)** to see a demonstration of how to plant a seed outdoors . Then, follow along with the remainder of the lesson by reading the steps below.
3. Before planting a seed, **it is important to gather some information on the species of plant you intend to sow**. This important information is located on the seed package itself, and following those instructions will maximize your growing potential. The garden's spacing (and proximity to other plants), the time of year, the natural environment, and other overarching factors will help inform you with how to proceed. Common metrics to look for on the seed packet include:
 -  **Frost tolerance:** Is the plant frost tolerant? Frost sensitive? Or does it require warm weather?
 -  **Spacing:** If planting in a row, what spacing is required between seeds of the same kind? What distance is optimal for spacing with other plants?
 -  **Number:** How many seeds should be planted in one spot? What is the germination rate of the seeds?



Depth: How far under the soil should the seed be placed?



Sunlight: Does this plant need to be in shade, indirect sunlight, or full sunlight?



Timing: What time of year is best to grow this plant?

4. After reading the seed packet, **clear the garden bed of any mulch or debris on top of the soil**. Using your hands or a trowel, **make several holes in the soil at the proper distance between plants and at the desired depth, or make a “row” (basically a small ditch) at the desired depth**. Make sure you have enough seeds for the amount of space you would like to plant. If you want to be precise, use a tape measure or ruler to mark out the depths and spacing between each hole.
5. Open the seed package, and empty several seeds into your hand. Usually, seed packages will instruct the gardener to plant at least two seeds at each sowing point or hole. **Place the advised number of seeds into each hole, or place the advised number at the proper between-plant spacing specifications within a row**. If it is difficult to add the correct number of seeds, try using a finger to gently press into a few seeds to see if they stick.
6. **Gently cover the hole or row with surrounding soil**, making sure to not disturb the seeds. Re-cover the soil with any mulch that was previously there. Be sure to water your seeds (as instructed in [How to Water Your Seeds](#))!