



~ How to Water Your Seeds ~

How much water is too much, and how much is too little?



Background

Just moments after [planting seeds](#), one should water them to begin the germination process. It is important to water seedlings relatively often -- at least once a day, if possible. Without enough water, the seeds may **dessicate** (dry up), which will halt the plant's initial stages of growth and will likely kill the plant. Of course, the opposite can be harmful as well: a plant that is overwatered may suffocate the seed, or attract harmful **pathogens** (diseases). In this lesson, the beginning gardener will discover exactly how much water is desirable for seeds.



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to...

-  Water seeds consistently with an appropriate amount of water
-  Understand what over watering and under watering will do to a seed


Academic Vocabulary

dessicate /'desə,kāt/ *verb.* - to dry out completely

pathogen /'paTHəjən/ *noun.* - a fungus, bacteria, virus, or other organism that causes a disease


Directions

- Gather your materials.** You will need the following supplies:
 - water source (sink, faucet, bathtub, etc.) · watering device (hose, watering can, bucket, cup, etc.)
- Watch [this Youtube video](#)** to see a demonstration of how to water seeds. Then, follow along with the remainder of the lesson by reading the steps below.
- Immediately after covering the soil to plant a seed, **find a water source and watering device** (see materials above in step 1) and **fill the device if necessary**.
- Using the watering device, **pour or spray water onto the garden bed where the seeds were planted**. Consider the following advice when watering:

 **Mimicking nature ...** It is very important to water the seeds in a way that will not disrupt the location of the seed in the soil -- after all, you took time to plant them at specific depths with specific spacing between them! If using a hose,

set it to a setting that mimics how rain would fall on the surface (a “shower”). With whatever you choose to water, you should ensure that the soil is not displaced in any way, so try to be as gentle as possible.

↓↑ **Too much or too little? ...** Sometimes, it is difficult to know exactly how much water a seed needs. The amount of water applied should be enough so that it actually trickles through the soil and does not evaporate on the surface without reaching the seed. Too much water on the surface, however, may attract some unfriendly pathogens. Therefore, the proper amount will be shown by wetting the surface of the soil until the water begins to “pool.” If the water drains away extremely quickly, apply more. However, if the water is beginning to stay for more than a few seconds, then you have likely watered enough. You may also consider the effects of where the seed is planted: seeds planted in the sun will lose moisture more quickly, and may require more water than those planted in the shade. You should always remain aware of any past, present, or future precipitation that fell on the seeds, and adjust the amount of water you give the seeds accordingly.

 **Timing is key...** Creating a fairly regular schedule for watering a seed is vital for the ultimate outcome of the plant. Setting out enough time *at least once a day* will be critical for the seeds’ maturation, since gaps in watering or too much watering may cause the problems mentioned above.