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## Garden Starts: Annual Seeds & Seedlings

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### **Indoor seeding— a cost effective and exciting approach to outdoor gardens.**

The perfect way to add new and interesting plants to your garden is by planting seeds during the winter. A small packet of flower or vegetable seeds yields a complete tray of seedlings for the same price that you would pay for just a few retail plant starts. Another advantage of starting your garden with seeds is that in a few short weeks you'll witness one of the most exciting times for gardeners, the birth of new seedlings as they emerge from the soil.

Although some seedlings are ready for transplanting earlier than others are, a rule of thumb is to start most annual seeds indoors six to eight weeks before you expect the last frost in your area. Seeds started too early tend to get leggy with weaker stems. Those started too late won't be vigorous enough to transplant when you're ready to garden outdoors.

### **Like any growing youngster, seedlings require special nurture and care.**

Seedlings are very susceptible to molds and other fungus, both of which are usually caused by over watering or poor drainage. Use sterile potting soil when planting seedlings to help ensure that spores and pathogens won't affect your planting. Also, be sure to keep the potting mixture moist but not wet. Fertilize your seedlings after the first set of leaves emerges, using a water-soluble fertilizer.

Seedlings require intense light, and while natural sunlight is best, it is often difficult to provide an adequate amount of sunlight during the short, late-winter days. However, seedlings tolerate artificial light in addition to a good dose of natural sunlight when it's available. Seedlings typically thrive with a minimum of 14 hours of light each day. Because young plants have a tendency to lean towards the light if you're growing them in a window, don't forget to turn your seedlings periodically to keep them standing straight.

Of course, before you can start seedlings, you'll need to find seeds to start!

## **Find everything you need in a flower seed catalog.**

Starting the majority of your plants by seed not only saves money but also yields great satisfaction as you watch your seedlings grow. If you are looking for the widest selection of flower seeds, you may have to look beyond your local garden center to a flower seed catalog where you'll normally find huge selections of every type of flower seed.

## **Browse a flower seed catalog to fulfill your own special needs.**

No matter what type of plant you are looking for, or what zone you live in, you will be able to find what you need in a flower seed catalog. Flower seed catalogs are an excellent place to find flower seeds for your specific garden needs. Shade or sun, annuals or perennials, flower seed catalogs offer flower seeds for every type of garden and every type of environment. In fact, although called "flower seed catalogs", most offer a gardener's compendium of vegetable seeds as well as flower seeds!

Not only can you find vegetable and flower seeds in a flower seed catalog but also you'll often find everything you need to start and grow your seeds, from water soluble fertilizers to special tools like covered starter trays. In addition, most mail order companies, as well as many online retailers offer free flower seed catalogs that you can send for and have delivered to your home to browse at your convenience. Of course, the benefit of shopping an online flower seed catalog is that you can browse the selections and immediately place your order when you've chosen your seeds, allowing for faster delivery.

When you are looking for the newest hybrids and unique cultivars, the flower seed catalog is the place to start. Full of all sorts of interesting plants, the flower seed catalog offers the gardener a chance to plough new fields and experience "something completely different" in gardening.

## **Plant a rewarding garden with seed packets.**

Seed packets are more than just a cost effective way to grow large bunches of flowers and bushel baskets full of vegetables. The backs of them are sown with valuable information on planting, often including light, care, and fertilization requirements. You'll also often find information about the best soil type for your planting, the length of time between planting and germination, specifications on spacing your seeds, mature plant size, and yield information. Of course, the front of most vegetable and flower seed packets pictures the result you should get from your gardening efforts!

When purchasing flower seed packets, along with those for individual cultivars you'll also find those that contain flower seed mixtures. A mixed flower seed packet is an excellent way to create a diverse flower garden with seeds. Whether you've planned a multi-colored garden or one in just a single color, mixed seed packets are an inexpensive way to implement your plan. Some are sold with a variety of cultivars in one color while others contain a single cultivar in many colors and some flower seed packets are filled with a potpourri of both colors and cultivars.

You can also find flower seed packets that contain a mixture of plants to provide you with a specific type of specialty garden. For example, some flower seed packets hold seeds that produce fragrant flowers; some contain mixtures that attract birds and butterflies, and some flower seed packets offer a mixture of seeds that produce plants that attract insects that are beneficial to all the plants in your garden.

Seed packets are a rewarding, as well as a very inexpensive way to create a garden. Start a plant from a seed and watch it grow and bloom in your garden! Once you've experienced the wonder of growing your own flowers, you may want to purchase your favorite annual cultivars in bulk!

### **Plant a stunning display with bulk flower seeds.**

The most popular way to bring color into a garden is by using flowers. However, planting a wide variety of flowers can get expensive. A cheaper alternative to buying seedlings and established plants for transplanting is by purchasing bulk flower seeds. Bulk flower seeds are an excellent value for the number of flowers that they produce.

Bulk flower seeds are an excellent idea if you have a large area that you would like to fill with blooms. Broadcasting flower seeds over a large garden area fills your garden space with blooms for the entire summer. The same as seeds in packets, bulk flower seeds cover a variety of special situations, containing special mixes for butterfly gardens, sun gardens, shade gardens and mixes designed to create beautiful cut flowers for bouquets. Broadcast a hillside with bulk wild flower seeds to cover a large area and add a naturally gorgeous picture of blooms to your landscape.

Often, bulk flower seeds come as annuals; however, perennial seeds are also included in many bulk seed mixtures. Some of the most common types of flower seeds that you can buy in bulk are Alyssum, Aster, Marigolds Daisy, and Zinnias, although there are many more varieties available than those listed.

Find bulk flower seeds in your favorite flower seed catalog, at your local garden supply store, favorite nursery, or online shop. No matter where you find them, you'll surely enjoy the wide variety of colors and blooms that bulk flower seeds bring to your garden.

One type of bulk seed planting that's rapidly growing in popularity is the flower seed mat.

### **Experience the ease of planting with a flower seed mat.**

Are you long on wanting a flower garden and short on time to plant one?

Do you find many flower seeds fiddly especially when planting instructions suggest shallow depths and fractional spaces between miniscule seeds?

Try a flower seed mat. Flower seed mats let you plant easily and quickly. Simply loosen the soil in your garden space, roll out the seed mat and water. That's all there is to it! Flower seed mats contain the seeds and everything they need to grow, except water.

### **How do flower seed mats work?**

Flower seeds are all pre-spaced and sandwiched between two pieces of organic tape. When you water the flower seed mat, be sure to water it very well, saturating all pieces of tape to enable the mat to conform to the shape of the underlying soil in your garden plot.

Because the seeds are all pre-spaced on the flower seed mat there's no worry about overcrowding of the seedlings. The organic tape soon disintegrates and completely disappears into the earth.

Although flower seed mats are usually more expensive than bulk flower seeds and flower seed packets, the ease of use and convenience they offer easily offsets the cost for the beginning gardener as well as the experienced gardener who's short on time.

### **Enjoy your garden from beginning to end.**

However you choose to plant them, starting from seeds gives you the full enjoyment of gardening from the time your seedlings emerge from the ground until the end of the season. Starting from seeds gives your garden a good start to healthy growth and a satisfying harvest.

## About Gardening-Guides.com

HDK-BeheerBV company is the parent company of Gardening-Guides.com. Started in 2004, Gardening-Guides.com is the brainchild of webmaster Hans Dekker. It's his vision to offer you a panoramic view of gardening.



In addition to being the trailblazer for Gardening-Guides.com, Hans is also a talented Internet businessman and owner of Net Research, Netherlands. Starting with just a few articles on Holland bulbs and tulips, Hans has not only used his Internet expertise to grow a virtual garden that holds dozens of cultivars, but he has also cultivated a team of talented writers that provides you with ever-fresh news and insights into every type of gardening you can imagine.

The mission of gardening-guides.com is to provide you, the gardener with quality information about year-round gardening, garden related topics and the resources you need to find the plants, tools, and other gardening products you need to grow a successful and satisfying garden.

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