



454 COLLEGE HIGHWAY, SOUTHWICK, MA 01077

Town of Southwick

Southwick Agricultural Commission

Telephone (413) 569-6907 Fax (413) 569-5284



Sofinowski Community Garden

Helpful Hints for a Successful Garden

DISCOURAGING RABBITS: Include some plants that rabbits avoid to protect the ones you want. The following have been named as plants avoided by rabbits...unless they're seriously hungry: onions, Lamb's Ear, leeks, Adam's needle, asparagus, summer squash, tarragon, most tomatoes, marjoram and oregano, rhubarb, mint, basil, peony, creeping phlox, parsley, primrose, lavender, salvia, day lily, sedum, foxglove, wild ginger, hyacinth, columbine, daffodils, ladybells, begonia, trumpet vine, ageratum, gooseberry, and bee balm (monarda).

PLANTS THAT DEER DON'T LIKE: Ageratum, aloe, snapdragon, astilbe, foxglove, dahlia, coneflowers (Echinacea), gaillardia, sunflowers, iris, bee balm, poppy, rosemary, salvia, dusty miller, marigold, wisteria, zinnia, periwinkle, parsley, daffodil, forget-me-nots, four o'clocks, dianthus, chameloen plant (houttuynia), sweet pea, morning glory .

STARTING YOUR OWN SEEDS INDOORS:

PREPARE YOUR SOIL: Potting "soil" from a garden center or hardware store is not the dirt you'll find in your garden. It is sterile and soil-less, usually containing some mix of perlite, vermiculite, sand, sphagnum, and sterilized compost. To start seeds, either buy potting soil or sterilize your own garden soil by baking it on a metal pan at 250 degrees for 15 minutes. Let the soil cool down before you plant your seeds.

PUT SOIL IN CONTAINERS: Trays are useful if you are planting several rows, but washed yogurt and margarine containers are free and work fine, as are milk cartons (plastic or waxed paper) with the top quarter cut off, leaving lots of room for root growth. Always wash repurposed food containers thoroughly and be sure to poke holes in the bottoms. Fill and pack down the planting medium. Store-bought planting mix is usually very dry at purchase, so water it well until saturated (may take a couple soakings) before planting your seeds.

PLANT THE SEEDS: Seeds can be encouraged to germinate by keeping them cool before planting, e.g., by storing your seeds in the refrigerator for 3 - 4 weeks. Check the seed packet for the recommended planting density. Plant a few extra in case all of them don't make it, but don't go overboard or it will be hard to thin out the rows. When the plants have their first full set of leaves, thin the seedlings, leaving the strongest ones. (Tweezers are useful for this).

WATER THE SEEDS: Water the seeds so the soil is moist, not wet. An ideal way is to set the containers in a tray filled with water so the soil "wicks" up only the water needed to saturate the container. Additional water can be drained off. There should be no puddles of water on top of the soil. Even watering will encourage the best germination results.

continued



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Hints *continued*

COVER THE CONTAINERS FOR THE FIRST 5 DAYS: Put glass or plastic over your trays. Cover cups or pots with foil or plastic wrap to seal the moisture in. Water initially, but the cover traps condensation and you shouldn't need to water for the next 5 days. Overwatering may cause your seedlings to rot. After you remove the cover check the soil moisture daily and water as needed.

KEEP PLANTS WARM AND LIGHTED: Seeds sprout better in a warm medium. Check seed packets or gardening books for the ideal germination temperatures for the different crops. Keep most plants at 65 to 75 degrees F. If you keep plants warm by placing them next to a heater, remember to check the moisture level of the soil so they don't dry out. Once sprouted, your seedlings will need a strong light source, such as a sunny counter or window. Ordinary 48" fluorescent lamps hung 6" - 10" above the seedlings will provide an even and constant source of light. You can set your lamps on a timer to achieve 14 - 16 hours of light per day.

FEED YOUR PLANTS: When the seeds sprout, you can begin adding plant food to your water. Use seaweed powder, fish emulsion or some other organic plant food. Be sure to read the directions for appropriate applications.