



How to Grow Seeds Using a Propagator

A fun guide for young gardeners!

Growing plants from seeds is a great way to watch nature in action. A **propagator** is like a tiny greenhouse that helps seeds stay warm and cosy while they sprout.



What Is a Propagator?

A propagator is a **plastic box with a clear lid**, kind of like a little house for seeds.

It keeps them warm and safe while they start to grow. Some propagators use electricity to stay warm, but in this guide, we'll use a **simple unheated one**.



Choosing Seeds That Are Easy for Kids

Some seeds are super easy to grow. Great beginner choices are:

- 🍅 **Tomatoes**
- 🫘 **Runner beans**
- 🌶️ **Chillies**
- 🌼 **Sweet peas**

★ **Top Tip:** You can use **growing pockets** – little compost pellets that grow bigger when you add water. They're tidy and easy to use!



When Should You Plant Your Seeds?

You can plant seeds inside **early in the year**, even as early as **January**, because the propagator keeps them warm. Just check your seed packet for hints.



How to Plant Your Seeds

Step 1: Fill the Tray

Fill your seed tray with **seed compost** (this is special soil just for seeds).
Make the top nice and flat by smoothing it gently.

Step 2: Add the Seeds

Check your seed packet:

- Tiny seeds can be **sprinkled** across the top.

- Bigger seeds can be **pushed in one by one**.
The packet will tell you how deep they should go.

Step 3: Cover Them

Sprinkle a thin layer of compost on top so the seeds are tucked in at the right depth.
If you're growing more than one plant, make **labels** so you don't forget what's what!

Step 4: Water Carefully

Use a watering can with a gentle sprinkle.
Or you can stand the tray in a shallow dish of water so the soil soaks it up from underneath.

Step 5: Put the Lid On

Place the tray in your propagator and put it somewhere warm.
A **windowsill** is perfect, but try to avoid very bright hot sun.

Every few days, turn the tray around so the plants don't lean towards the light.

How Many Seeds Should You Plant?

Not too many! If seeds grow too close together, they get squished and can't grow properly.
If two seeds grow in the same spot, keep the **bigger, stronger** one and gently remove the smaller one.

★ **Top Tip:** Use **seed compost**, not normal compost. Normal compost is too heavy for tiny seeds.

Caring for Your Seedlings

Your baby plants need three main things:

1. Light

- Put them where they get **good daylight**.
- Turn the tray so they grow straight and strong.

2. Water

- Keep the soil **moist but not soggy**.
- Let the soil dry a little before you water again.
- Some propagators have a special mat that helps the plants drink water from below. Check your propagator every day — seedlings get thirsty!

3. Temperature: Keep them somewhere warm (around **18–25°C**), away from cold drafts.

Your seed packet will tell you exactly what they like.



Growing Guide



Easy Tips for Growing Your Veggies & Herbs

French Beans

- Plant the seeds in two neat lines.
- Leave a small gap (like your little finger) between seeds.
- Cover them with a tiny bit of soil.
- These beans grow like a bush, so **no sticks needed!**
- Pick them when the pods look fat, not flat.

Broad Beans

- Plant beans under a small layer of soil (about the size of a big Lego brick).
- Give them space to grow.
- Water well in spring.
- If they grow tall, tie them gently to a stick.
- When you see tiny pods forming, pinch off the top leaves.
- Pick early for small pods, or wait until beans inside feel big.

Peas

- Plant peas just below the soil.
- Make a zig-zag line with the peas.
- Peas love to climb—give them twigs to hold onto.
- Pick them when the pods feel firm and full.

Beetroot

- Sprinkle seeds in a line with tiny gaps between them.
- Pick them when they grow as big as a golf ball.

Carrots

- Sprinkle seeds gently—don't pour the whole packet!
- When they start growing, leave just one plant every few centimetres.
- Pick early for baby carrots or later for big ones.

Lettuce

- Scatter seeds lightly.
- When the plants get three leaves, give them space.
- Pick the outer leaves and let the middle grow back again!

Radish

- Plant seeds with little gaps.
- They grow fast!
- Pick them when the round bit starts to look bigger.

Tomatoes (Bush Type)

- Plant one plant in a sunny spot.
- No tying or pruning needed!
- Keep the soil damp.
- Pick tomatoes when they look ready and tasty.

Potatoes

- Leave potatoes in the light until they grow tiny sprouts.
- Plant them in a bag with compost.
- As they grow, keep covering them with more compost.
- Water often.
- Pick after about 14 weeks.

Sage (Herb)

- This plant grows like a little bush.
- It survives very cold weather.
- Great for flavouring food.

Oregano / Marjoram (Herb)

- Grows low and spreads out wide.
- Very hardy in winter.
- Tastes great in pizza and pasta dishes.

Strawberries

- Grow fruit in summer.
- They make baby plants called *runners*.
- Pin them into the soil to grow new strawberry plants!

Peppers (Sweet or Hot)

- Loves lots of sunshine.
- Keep the soil damp until peppers appear.
- Then let the soil dry a bit between watering.
- Pick green or wait for colourful peppers.

Garlic

- Plant pointy end up.
- Water in spring and early summer.
- Garlic is ready when the bottom leaves turn brown.
- Dry it in a warm place, then store it somewhere cool and dark.

- Dry them and store somewhere cool and dark.



General Tips

- Plant as soon as you can.
- Water well after planting.
- Keep pots somewhere sunny.
- You don't need to water in winter unless the soil looks dry.
- All these plants can survive the cold—even snow and frost!

Onions

- Plant with the pointy tip sticking out of the soil.
- Water in spring and early summer.
- Onions are ready when their stalk falls over.



Fun Plant Facts for Young Growers!



BEANS

- Beans **climb like acrobats**, wrapping themselves around sticks and poles!
- They grow **super fast** — sometimes you can see a difference in just one day.
- Beans take **nitrogen from the air** and put it into the soil, making it healthier for other plants.



SPRING BULBS

(like daffodils, tulips, crocus)

- Bulbs are like **sleepy plant batteries** — everything they need to grow is already inside!
- They're planted in autumn and **wake up in spring** all on their own.
- Some bulbs can **come back every year** without any help at all.



STRAWBERRIES

- Strawberries wear their **seeds on the outside** — about 200 of them!
- A strawberry plant can make **little baby plants** by sending out runners (tiny vine-like stems).
- Bees love strawberry flowers, and without them, you wouldn't get juicy fruit.



Carrots

- Carrots were originally **purple**, not orange!
- The part we eat is actually the plant's **root**.



Potatoes

- Potatoes grow **underground like treasure**.
- You can grow lots of new potatoes from just **one chunk** of an old potato.



Tomatoes

- Tomatoes are actually a **fruit**, even though we use them like vegetables.
- One plant can grow **hundreds of tomatoes** in one season!



Sweetcorn

- Each corn kernel is a **seed**, and every silk thread on the cob leads to one kernel.
- Corn plants can grow taller than an adult — **they make great hiding spots!**



Cucumbers

- Cucumbers are mostly **water** — about 95%!
- They love to **stretch and climb** on trellises like little green gymnasts.



Peppers

- All peppers start out **green**, then turn red, yellow, or orange as they ripen.
- A single pepper plant can grow **surprising colours** all at once.



Onions

- Onions grow layers like **tiny vegetable ogres**.
- They grow well in almost any weather, making them really tough plants.



Garlic

- Garlic grows from **cloves**, which are like its tiny “superhero sidekicks.”
- It keeps pests away — garlic is like a **natural garden bodyguard**.



Lettuce

- Lettuce grows fast — you can eat some just **a few weeks after planting**.
- Pick the outside leaves and the plant keeps growing back!



Peas

- Peas love to **climb nets or sticks** and grow curly tendrils like tiny green hands.
- They were one of the **first crops ever farmed** by humans!



Pumpkins

- Pumpkins are 90% water — big and light inside!
- Bees help pollinate pumpkin flowers early in the morning.



Mint

- Mint spreads super fast, like a **fresh-smelling ninja**.
- Rubbing the leaves releases a minty smell children love.



Basil

- Basil grows better when you **pick it often**, making it perfect for kids.
- Bees love its flowers, making it a garden hero.