

**Getting Ready for
Spring - Growing Your
Own Plants**

This week's flyer is a different twist on local food. While we want to be your source for local, nutritious and sustainably grown food, we also want to encourage everyone to be a local grower. Webb Nursery is a great local company and wanted to share some information that we thought would be informative for our members.

STARTING VEGETABLE, HERB AND FLOWER SEEDS INDOORS By Sunny Mills & Sheila Kelley

Starting seeds can be a fun, easy, successful means of starting new garden plants. All you need is a little soil, a pot or tray and a warm place to set the seedlings.

Flowers, especially perennials, and flower crops such as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, etc. can be started indoors as early as late March or early April. Leaf crops such as spinach, lettuce, chard can start early also. When starting leaf crops, start some seeds, then wait two weeks and start another crop so your garden harvest isn't all at once. Tomatoes do very well started indoors along with basil and other culinary herbs.

An all purpose potting soil is best to start seedlings. One with vermiculite or perlite keeps the soil mix light and allows new roots to develop easily. Little peat pellets work well and make transplanting to the garden or pots easy. If you use soil from your garden, sterilize it against weed seed, bugs and disease, by baking it in the oven for about two hours at 170-180 degrees.

You can start seeds in any type of container. Trays, flats, pots, egg cartons or even egg shells are suitable. Fill the container to overflowing with soil. Having the soil level high allows air to flow across it thus aiding in the control of damp-off disease.

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Next step is to sow the seeds. Sowing instructions are on the back of every seed packet and will specify the correct planting depth, spacing, time to sow and other pertinent information. Typically, seeds just need a bare amount of soil to cover. The finer the seed, the least amount of soil is needed.

Water the seeds with a spray bottle to keep from disrupting the soil and the seeds. At first, you may have to spray several times to get the soil wet. Using warm water the first three days helps 'wake up' the seeds and speeds germination time. After the seeds have germinated, keep moisten with water a little warmer than room temperature.

Keep the newly seeded containers in a warm spot where the temperature is between 65 to 75 degrees day and no cooler than 50 degrees at night. Select a place where there is bright light at least 6 to 8 hours per day or use grow lights. Grow lights, or even full spectrum florescent lights, kept 12-15 inches above the soil, and on for 8-10 hours a day will greatly aid in getting your seeds started.

After the seedlings have formed a couple of sets of true leaves they can be transplanted outdoors after all danger of frost has passed. Space according to packet directions or pot individually.

Sunny and Sheila both work with Webb Landscape where you can find seeds, soils and containers!



Imagine ...

- + Knowing where your food comes from, who is producing it, and their ethics and farming practices
- + Working in support of the health of your local community food shed where energy stays local and supports our rural economy

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