



# Lincoln County Master Gardener Association

## Seed Starting

LCMGA Gardening Roundtable Series

# Seed Starting

## March 19, 2022

**Marlene Shapiro & Ann Geyer**  
**Lincoln County Master Gardeners**

### Welcome to the Gardening Roundtable Series

- Access the meeting controls at the bottom of display screen or by tapping the screen if viewing on a mobile device
- We will mute your microphone during the presentation
- Use the CHAT option for questions; you can post these any time
- Closed caption option is enabled; you will need to click on the CC icon
- The session is being recorded and will be available on the LCMGA website for future reference

# OSU Extension Master Gardener Program

- OSU Extension Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who serve their community with solid training in science-based, sustainable gardening and a love of lifelong learning.
- 12 Week training program that covers all the basic gardening topics.
- Volunteers staff a plant clinic, demonstration gardens, and organize various educational gardening activities.
- Contact Evie Smith  
[evie.smith@oregonstate.edu](mailto:evie.smith@oregonstate.edu)  
541-574-6534 x57418
- Browse our gardening resources at [orcoastmga.org](http://orcoastmga.org)

# Why germinate seeds?

- Greater control over growing conditions
- Broader selection of plants
- More plants at less cost



# How to choose seeds

- Basics

- Location
- Microclimate
- Personal preferences
- Organic or not
- Reliable source



# When to start seeds?

- Depends on location
  - outdoors, indoors, greenhouse
- Know your microclimate
- Special conditions that the seed requires



# When to start seeds indoors?

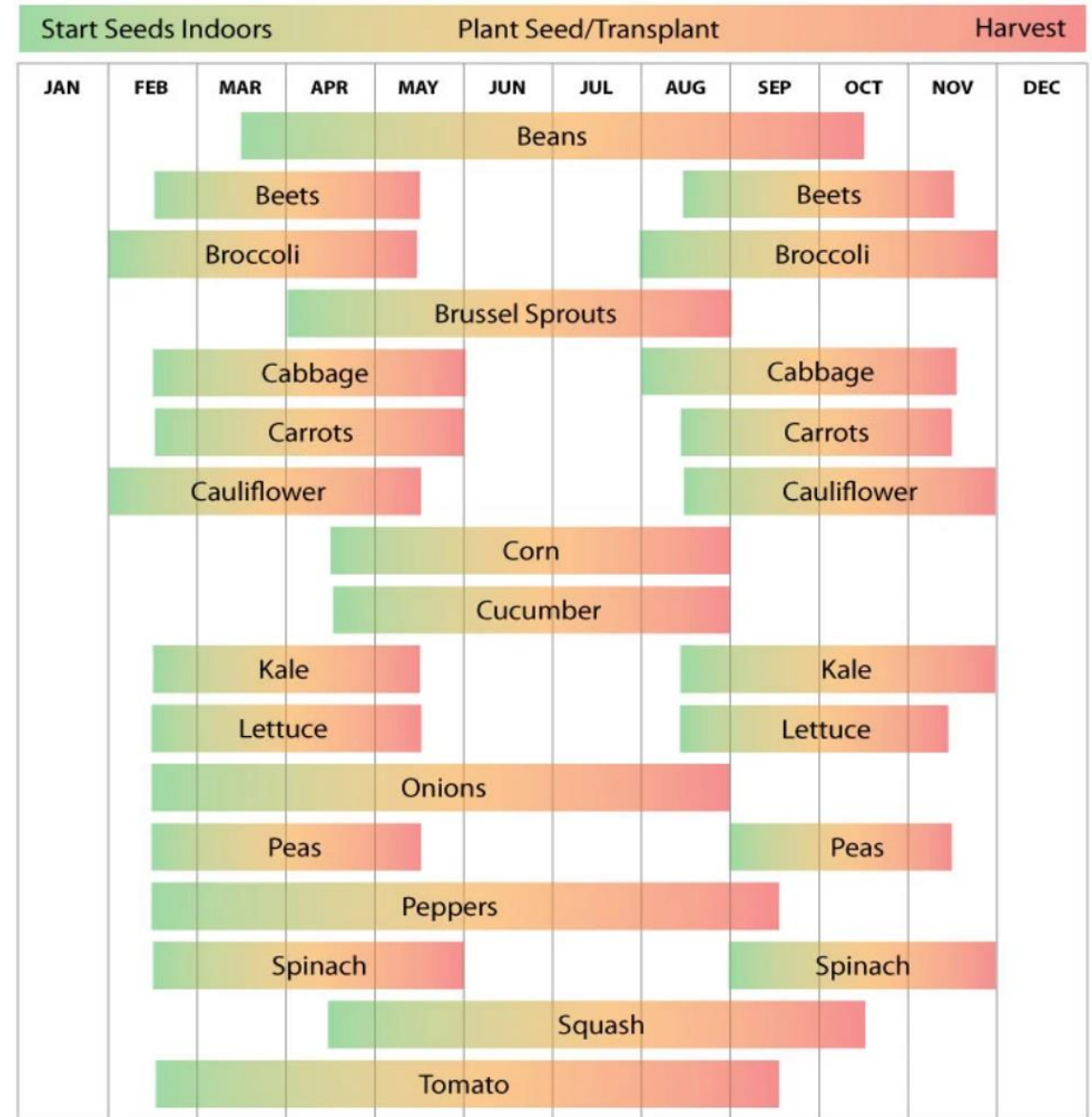
- Generally 6-8 weeks before last frost
- OSU vegetable start guide
  - <https://www.orcoastmga.org/rt/handouts>
- Farmer's almanac for annuals/perennials
  - <https://www.almanac.com/when-plant-flowers>



## Oregon Last & First Frost Dates

City	Last Frost Date	First Frost Date
Arlington	5/7	9/30
Ashland	6/2	9/26
Bandon	5/19	10/12
Brookings	4/12	11/17
Cloverdale	5/8	10/30
Cottage Grove	6/11	9/16
Dufur	6/18	9/10
Eugene	5/22	10/11
Fossil	7/18	8/19
Grizzly	7/29	8/9
Hood River	5/23	9/24
Lakeview	6/26	9/5
Newport	5/10	10/18
Oregon City	4/28	10/18
Portland	4/26	10/18
Riddle	5/15	9/29
Salem	5/22	9/28
Vale	6/2	9/16

## Zone 8 Planting Schedule





# What equipment is needed?

- Any container that holds 2" of soil
  - With bottom holes for drainage
  - Can withstand watering
- Humidity lid
- Water tray (esp if growing inside)
- Seed starting mix
- Light source
- Heat source
- Labels



# What type of soil to use?

- Seed starting soil
  - Essentially sterile
  - Finer particle mix
  - Lower in nutrients
  - Better drainage
- Recommended for fine seeds/all seeds



# Is potting mix okay?

- Regular potting soil
  - Crumbling texture
  - Moisture retentive
  - Drains well
- Not recommended for fine seeds
- Good for transplanting small seedlings before sowing outdoors



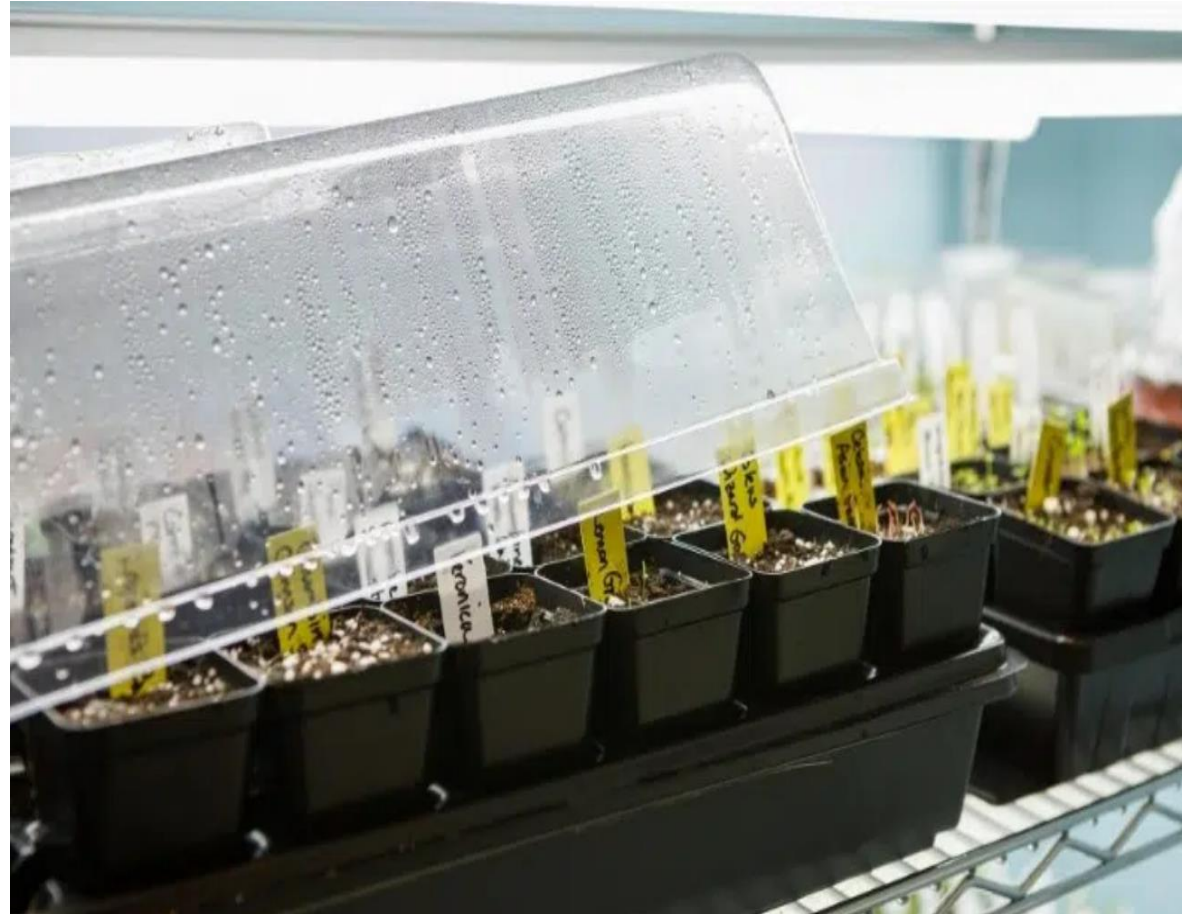
# How to plant?

- Pre-moisten soil
- Lightly pack the pot/tray to ~1/2" below lid
- Place seeds using spacing & depth info from seed packet
- Cover or surface plant
- Water lightly using
- Label—very important—seed type and planting date
- Use humidity dome
- Place on heat mat or substitute until germination



# What about humidity domes?

- Useful but not necessary
- Generally increase germination rates
- Remove immediately after germination
- Seedlings need air circulation and light immediately after germination



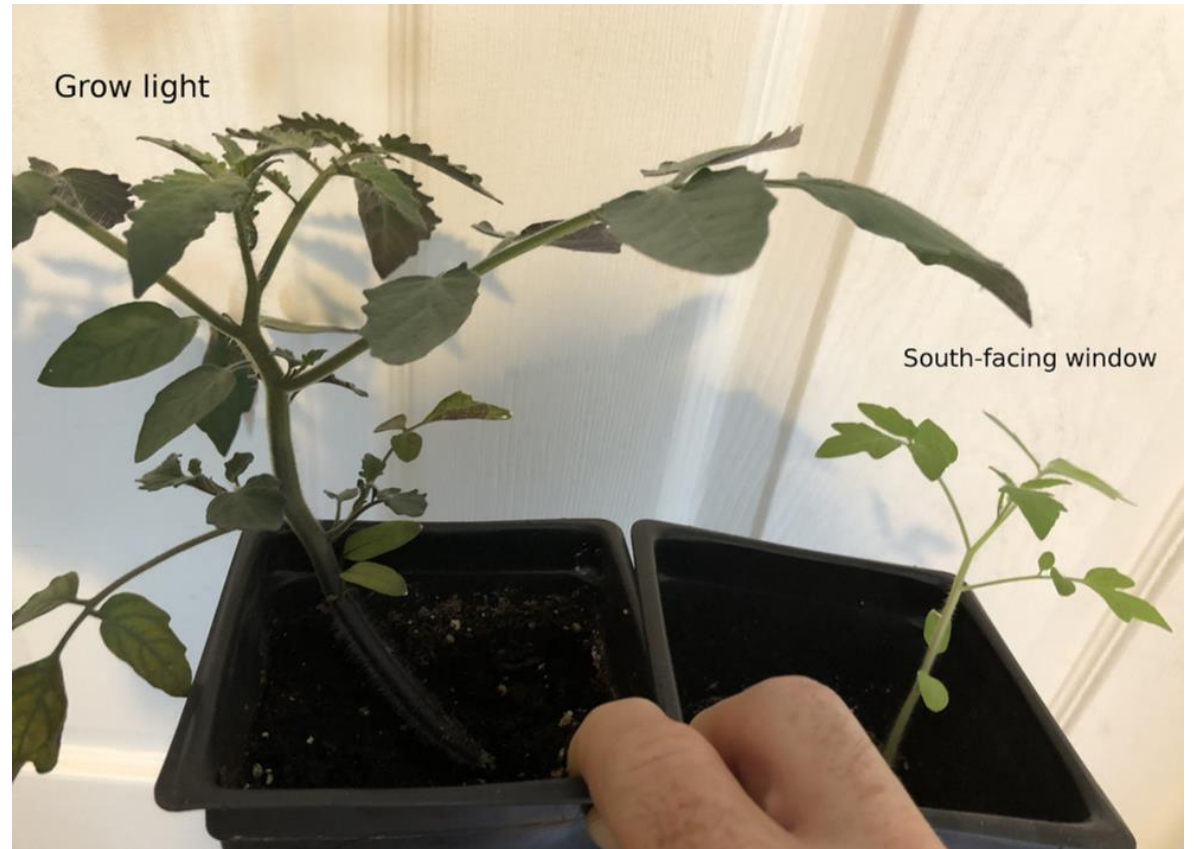
# Heating Mats

- Get one with thermostat
- Any size to fit your area
- Remove from mat after germination



# Window or grow light

- Both work
- Grow light has advantages
  - More consistent light source
  - Longer light periods
  - Seedlings grow faster, stronger



# Grow Lights

- Florescent shop lights
  - Hot
  - Limited light dispersion
  - Works but takes a bit longer to reach transplant stage
- LED T5 strip lights
  - Cool/warm
  - Better light dispersion
  - Grows faster—more light
- Full spectrum lights
  - Designed for indoor growing
  - Extremely bright
  - Harder to use for seedlings; better for plant growing





# Top or Bottom Watering



# Thinning seedlings

- Creates stronger seedlings
- Reduces root competition
- Better able to take advantage of nutrients, fertilizer, sun, etc



# Fertilizing

- Wait until there are 2 sets of true leaves
- Use liquid at  $\frac{1}{2}$  strength
  - Allows for better control
  - Can react faster
  - Immediately available
- Don't overfeed
- NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium)
  - Know the plants requirements



# Pinching for annuals & perennials

- Pinch off the main stalk to encourage branching
- Creates a fuller plant



# Hardening off

- Gradually exposes seedlings to the outdoors
- Creates a stronger plant
- Place in protected outdoor area for successively longer time
- Usually over the course of 1-2 weeks

