



**NATALIE HODSON**

# *SEED STARTING 101*



**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO  
KNOW ABOUT STARTING  
SEEDS INDOORS**

[www.nataliehodson.com](http://www.nataliehodson.com)



# WHY START SEEDS INDOORS?

## EXTENDS YOUR SEASON

You can't plant outdoors until last risk of frost has passed

Starting your seeds indoors allows you to get a head start, so when that frost date has passed, you can plant transplants in the dirt outdoors

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## GIVES YOU MORE VARIETY

When you buy your transplants from the store, you are limited to the handful of ones they decide to grow. You can grow all kinds of fun varieties of vegetables by purchasing unique seeds that you wouldn't find anywhere else.

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## CONTROLLED GERMINATION

Because you are controlling the environment (temperature, weather conditions, etc) you have a higher chance of seeds germinating when started indoors

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## SAVES MONEY

The first year you will invest in your heat mats and lights, but after that, you will save loads of money each year by not having to buy transplants at the store at \$3-5 each.

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## YOU CAN SELECT THE STRONGEST PLANTS

Not all seeds are created equal. Starting your seeds indoors allows you to pick the strongest one and transplant that one to your garden.

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## PREVENT PESTS AND WEATHER DAMAGE TO YOUNG SEEDLINGS

Young plants are delicate, and birds love to eat them. Starting your seeds indoors protects them from harsh rain, and birds/insects wanting to eat them.

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# SUPPLIES YOU'LL NEED

## MEDIUM (SOIL)

Use "Seed Starting Mix". I like Black Gold brand.

You can also use "peat pots" like THIS one here if you prefer.

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## NUTRITION (FERTILIZER)

You need to feed your seedlings. I like adding Micorrhizae to my soil when I first begin.

Once I see the first true set of leaves I spray my plants Ocean Harvest (I use this regularly in my garden too)

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## SEED TRAYS

You need to have trays to plant your seeds in. I like to find ones that have 72 cells, holes in the bottom for drainage, and a lid. Like THIS one.

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## LIGHTS (POSSIBLY)

If you don't have a lot of unobstructed natural light, you will need grow lights like THESE.

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## SEEDS

This is the fun part! Decide on whatever seeds you want based on what you want to grow! I love the seeds from Baker Creek Heirloom Garden.

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## WATER

You'll need to regularly water your seeds. You can use a regular spray bottle but your hand may get tired. I really like this auto sprayer.

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## SEED STORAGE CONTAINERS

I like to store my seeds year after year in photo containers like this one HERE. This will prevent them from getting wet or disorganized.

## HEAT MATS

I use these to control the soil temperature. Your germination will massively improve with heat mats. I have THESE one.



## PLAN YOUR GARDEN

Before you can start your seeds, you will need to know what you want to plant in your garden! I like using the website [www.smartgardener.com](http://www.smartgardener.com) (it's only \$10). Here is an example of what my plan looks like this year!



Natalie Hodson  
HEALTHY LIVING FOR LIFE

# KNOW WHEN TO PLANT

This is the part that will vary depending on what zone you live in. In Boise, Idaho, I am in zone 6B. We typically can't plant majority of the garden outdoors until Mother's Day. That is usually the date that the last risk of frost has passed.

Knowing these dates will help you decide when to start your seeds indoors.

[HERE](#) is a link of the spreadsheet I made/use that you can model for your own zone and garden if you'd like.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Type	Name	Space	Indoor Seed Date	Germination	# of seeds to plant	# of plants	Transplant to Garden	Days to Maturity	Instructions	Appx Harvest Date	Ideal Temp	Notes	Brand
2	Broccoli	Purple Sprouting	plants 18-24" apart with rows 2-3' apart	asap	7-10 days			May 10 - May 30	120 days	cover seeds with 1/8" of fine soil	Sept 7	n/a	Cut the main head when buds are still tight. Continue to harvest side shoots for small heads. Loses most of color when cooked	Ed Hume
3	Cabbage	Late Flat Dutch	24-36" apart rows, plants 18-24" apart	asap	7-10 days			April 10	100-110 days	1/8" fine soil	n/a	n/a	Large late cabbage with oval flattened heads. Excellent for fall harvest and winter storage. Great for sauerkraut. Plant cabbage in sunny location where no cabbage or broccoli was grown the year before.	Ed Hume
4	Cabbage	Red Acre	24-36" apart rows, plants 18-24" apart	asap	7-10 days			April 10	77 days from transplant	1/8" fine soil	n/a	n/a	top-notch, red variety used raw, cooked or in coleslaw. Heads are deep red, globe-shaped, 6-7" in diameter. Stores well.	Hume Organic Seeds
5	Cherry Tomato	Barry's Crazy Cherry	24"	asap	7-14 days			May 10 - May 30	n/a	1/8 deep	n/a	75-95	full sun, heavy producers, stake well	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
6	Cherry Tomato	Black Cherry	12-24"	asap	7-14 days			May 10 - May 30	n/a	1/4 deep	n/a	75-85	Rows 4' apart, plants get 4' tall, indeterminate	High Mowing Organic Seeds
7	Cherry Tomato	Goldie Ground Cherry Tomato	18-24"	asap	7-14 days			May 10 - May 30	n/a	1/4 deep	n/a	75-85	Rows 4' apart, plants get 3' tall	High Mowing Organic Seeds
8	Cherry Tomato	Peacevine	12-24"	asap	7-14 days			May 10 - May 30	n/a	n/a	n/a	75-85	Rows 4' apart, plants get 4' tall, indeterminate	High Mowing Organic Seeds
9	Cherry Tomato	Tommy Toe	24-36"	asap	7-14 days			May 10 - May 30	70 days	1/4 deep	July 19	n/a	indeterminate	Seed Savers Exchange
10	Herb	Chamomile	6"	asap	n/a			May 10 - May 30	n/a	surface sow	n/a	n/a	Hardy annual to 20" plants require full sun. Thinly sprinkle seeds on the soil surface and keep moist until sprouts appear (light required for germination).	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
11	Herb	Echinacea	18-24"	asap	n/a			May 10 - May 30	n/a	surface sow	n/a	n/a	PERENNIAL. 4 ft plants require full sun and rich, moist yet well drained soil. Do better on year 2.	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
12	Herb	Genovese Basil	12"	asap	n/a			May 10 - May 30	n/a	surface sow	n/a	n/a	Removing the flower heads may prolong the harvest.	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
13	Herb	Oregano	10" apart	asap	7-14 days			May 10 - May 30	n/a	surface sow or barely cover the seeds		72-76	surface sow and gently press seeds into soil. Light required for germination. For drying, harvest when flowers just begin to bloom. Frost hardy.	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
14	Herb	Thyme Wild	6-12"	asap	14-28 days			May 10 - May 30	n/a	surface sow	n/a	n/a	PERENNIAL. Forms thick mats with tiny rose-purple flowers. Very fragrant, useful as edging between stepping stones. Shear older plants for compact growth. Frost hardy.	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
15	Pepper - Hot	Korean Dark Green (for Kimchi)	12-18" apart, rows 18-36" apart	asap	n/a		1	May 20	n/a	surface sow or barely cover the seeds	n/a	n/a	2-feet tall plants have dark green foliage, and produce 3-4" slender peppers that are dark green to red. Very spicy and hot.	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
16	Pepper - Sweet	Golden California Wonder Sweet Pepper	12-18" apart, rows 18-36" apart	asap	10-14 days		1	May 20	80 days	1/4" deep	August 8	n/a	Golden-orange bell peppers, medium size plants bear a plentitude of medium sized, thick walled peppers that mature from green to orange. Harvest promptly to encourage higher yields of ripe fruit.	High Mowing Organic Seeds
17	Pepper - Sweet	King of the North Sweet Pepper	12-18" apart, rows 18-36" apart	asap	10-14 days		1	May 20	72 days	1/4" deep	July 31	n/a	Very bushy high yielding plants can produce 14-20 large, blocky fruits apiece. harvest green, or wait until they turn a bright red.	High Mowing Organic Seeds
18	Pepper - Sweet	Miniature Chocolate Bell Pepper	12-24" apart	asap	14 days		1	May 20	90 days from transplant	1/4" deep	August 18	n/a	n/a	Seed Savers Exchange
19	Pepper - Sweet	Ozark Giant	12-18" apart, rows 18-36" apart	asap	7-10 days		1	May 20	n/a	1/4" deep	n/a	n/a	n/a	Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds