Grow to Give

Support Horatio's Garden and your community with little acts of kindness

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SEED PRICKING

Most seeds are best started indoors, particularly if your planting in April or May. This is because outside there's still a chance of frost at this time of year, depending on where you are in the country. More of a threat are the slugs and snails, who love young and tender plants!

1. For smaller seeds, such as salad leaves or tomatoes, these are usually best started off in a seed tray. If you don't have one, simply make some holes in an old plastic mushroom container (or something with a similar depth).
2. Fill the container with compost, then tap the container on your work surface to remove any large air spaces, but do not press the soil down.
3. Sprinkle the seeds over the surface so that they do not touch each other and are evenly spaced. Sprinkle a little compost over the seeds so you cannot see them. Water them well and then make sure you keep the compost moist - check them daily as it's important they don't dry out at this point.
4. Once your seedlings have grown tall enough to handle they will need 'pricking out'. This is moving them into another container. If possible, try to move them to small (approx. 9cm) individual pots. These could be small yoghurt pots if you don't have plant pots, but be sure to poke a few small holes in the bottom to allow water out.
5. To start pricking out the seeds, take a dibber or a small pencil and gently loosen the soil around your seedlings.

Steps 1-3: Sowing seeds in your seed tray

Step 5: Pricking out your seedlings

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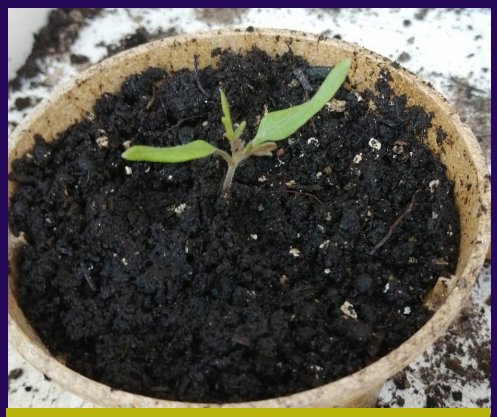
6. Lift each seedling using the leaves, not the roots or stem, and gently separate the roots if they are entwined with those of another.
7. Fill your small pot with compost, again tapping to remove large air spaces and topping it up if neccessary with compost.
8. Use your dibber or pencil to poke a deep hole in the compost and plant your seedling in the hole, deeper than it was in the previous container. This will help to strengthen the plant as it will send out roots from the stem, which is covered, helping to stop it from being leggy (long and spindly).

Step 6: Lift seedlings by the leaves

Step 8: Poke a hole in the compost

Step 8: Plant your seedling



Step 8: Cover the stem

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