



Benefits of starting your own seeds

- Far greater selection. Example: Seed Savers Exchange online store offers over 70 tomato heirloom varieties.
- Quality control: avoid importing diseases, insects.
- You get plants when you want.

Seed starting setup

Seedling flats

- Wampler sells 1*4 rough cut, 4" paneling slips together to make bottoms.
- Cedar is soft, so drill holes for nails and screws.

Other options

Plastic spinach containers, paper pots

Homemade plant stand



- Locally-harvested bamboo.
- Tied with wire, twine.
- Lights hung with chain.
- Two shelves: starting and growing transplants.

Chains allow flexible light placement



Grow lights on the cheap

- Professional grow lights cost hundreds of dollars.
- Not necessary for home gardeners.



- 12 4-foot natural light fluorescent bulbs cost about \$31 at Lowe's.
- Four-foot, 2 bulb fixtures cost about \$10.

Seedling mix

- Needs to be light weight to avoid smothering, root rot, damping off.
- Kimas Tejas has good mix, Fertlome Ultimate Potting Mix.
- Cornell Mix: equal parts peat and vermiculite. Add small amounts of balanced fertilizer, plus limestone for pH balance. Peat and perlite have little nutrient value themselves.
- Texas Ag-Extension recommends soilless mix.

Keep your babies warm

- Bottom heat necessary for starting warm-season vegetables (tomato, pepper) in winter.
- Important to know when to take seedlings off heat. Once peppers show first true leaves, heated roots will stunt growth, yellow plants.
- Clear plastic shower curtain to tent, create warm mini-greenhouse. Heat generated by fixtures sufficient for most seedlings.
- Tomatoes like more heat during development, otherwise they get purple stems, undersides of leaves.
- For starting fall/winter crops in summer, no heat necessary unless you run AC real cold (under 75°).

Raising healthy starts

- After 1st set of true leaves develop, spray with light solution of liquid seaweed when watering.
- Use planting mix containing fertilizer for convenience.

Heating Mat



Seedling flat with soil



Add Seeds



Seedling flat after planting



Seedling flat at home



Plastic cover raises humidity, keeps soil warmer for better germination.

When to transplant

- When 2 sets of leaves show.
- Most commercial potting mixes too heavy, cause root rot.
- Kimas Tejas has Pro-Mix, very good.
- Home-made mix: 1 part each compost, potting mix, peat, perlite.
- Cornell mix (peat/vermiculite mix).
- First transplant to 4-inch or quart pots.
- To jump-start season, start earlier, second transplant to gallon nursery pot.

Enjoy your garden



Eat fresh produce



A photograph of a garden bed. The bed is filled with green leafy plants and a large pile of brown, fibrous material, possibly mulch or compost. Several white PVC pipes are stuck into the ground around the perimeter of the bed. The background shows a grassy area and some trees. The text "The End" is overlaid in the center in a bold, yellow, italicized font.

The End