

Healthy Home and Garden Tips

Starting seeds indoors

With spring around the corner, now is the perfect time to plan your chemical-free garden. With limited space and income, I want to decide now which veggies to grow in my small garden plot and patio pots so I have all the seeds in hand when it's time to start them indoors. Although it takes a little more time to start plants from seeds, it's a less expensive option than purchasing seedlings for transplant. When possible, I save even more money by sowing seeds harvested from my favorite vegetables the previous season. I'll even collect seeds, like bell pepper, found in veggie scraps after I've cooked a meal. Old egg cartons or plastic clamshell containers reused as mini-greenhouses are a great alternative to store-bought pots. No need for fancy tools either. I just use scissors, a pencil, pen and old Popsicle sticks for my planting projects. Sowing seeds indoors has other perks too. It helps protect heat-loving plants from unexpected late spring frosts and extends the growing season of slow-growing cool crops. Growing seeds indoors is a fun and easy project. With a little planning, a few supplies and tools, and these tips, you'll be on your way to seed starting success.

When to start seeds inside:

- February: Broccoli, cauliflower, shallots, onions, parsley
- March: Tomatoes, tomatillos, cabbage, eggplant, peppers
- April: Basil, summer squash, winter squash, cucumber, sunflower



Tips for Starting Seeds Indoors

1. Grow seeds directly in a container like an egg carton with a seed start mix or fold seeds into a moist paper towel or coffee filter.
2. Start seeds in a warm spot away from direct sunlight, like on top of a refrigerator, until the seeds sprout.
3. Clean and reuse plaster zipper bags or clamshell containers to help seeds sprout quicker, by placing the small seedling pots or the moist paper towel/coffee filter inside the bags or containers.
4. Check the seeds frequently to make sure the soil or paper towels stay moist.
5. Transplant the seedlings grown in paper towels/coffee filters to small pots or old egg cartons and place in a sunny spot. Move to larger containers as they continue to grow.
6. Research when you can safely move your starts outside without risk of frost damage.

Post-Party Clean-Up

The big game is over but the post-party clean-up has just begun. The disaster left behind by my sports' fans is best described by one word – TRASH, lots of it. Empty pizza boxes litter the kitchen counter and a trail of potato chip crumbs leads to an assortment of dishes, dirty napkins and empty soda cans strewn about the living room. If that's not bad enough, a shark-shaped stain from a spilled drink is now the centerpiece of my couch. While it's tempting to toss everything into the trash, many of the items can be recycled. I also have a recipe for stain removal that doesn't require the use of harmful ingredients. The mess looks daunting but with the help of my post-game clean-up crew and these simple tips, the clean-up will be fast and easy.

Safe and effective stain removal

- **Red wine:** Quickly blot up as much as possible. Apply a thick layer of salt; let sit for 1-5 minutes, or until it has absorbed the spill. Repeat for large stains, and rinse with water and soap as necessary.
- **Tomato sauce or tomato juice:** Blot up excess. Apply club soda with a soft cloth and continue to blot. Rub gently with soap and water until stain is lifted.
- **Soda or coffee:** Combine one tablespoon liquid hand washing detergent with two cups cold water. Apply mix to stain using a clean white cloth. Blot thoroughly until stain disappears.

Recycle or Not?	
Use the chart below for information on what can be recycled at home.	
Recycle	
	Clean paper and cardboard boxes
	Round plastic 6 oz or larger containers
Trash	
	Treated with moisture resistant plastic to keep from disintegrating
	Caps and lids are difficult for recycling equipment to sort

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oregonmetro.gov/garden
oregonmetro.gov/healthyhome
oregonmetro.gov/askmetro
[youtube.com/user/OregonMetroGov](https://www.youtube.com/user/OregonMetroGov)

Ask Metro

Recycling Information Center at 503-234-3000, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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