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Sementi
dal 1783

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This guide has been designed to give some tips to facilitate the DIY production of garden seedlings starting from a simple seed.

This operation, contrary to what might be thought, is easy to implement and economically very advantageous.

Small tips will allow you to save in managing your family garden and produce seedlings of varieties more to your liking.

Our guide will specifically focus on the production of seedlings with 'bread of earth'.

THE CHOICE OF SEEDS

The first rule is to use quality seeds and varieties that best adapt to the climate of your area during the different periods of the year.

The scheduling of sowing in seed trays or cubes is of considerable importance; this is to have the seedling ready for transplanting at the desired and, above all, most suitable times for proper growth.

The table shown here may be helpful.

Species	Sowing	Transplanting	no. seeds per g circa
WATERMELON	from March to June	from April to July	10
ASPARAGUS	from March to June	from April to July	50
BASIL	from February to July	from March to August	800
GARDEN BEET (BEETROOT)	from March to June	from April to July	60
BEETROOT LEAVES (BEET GREENS)	from March to August	from April to September	65
ARTICHOKE	from March to May	from April to July	22
ENDIVE	from March to May	from April to July	25
BRUSSELS SPROUTS	from March to August	from April to September	300
CABBAGE HEAD	from March to August	from April to September	250
CAULIFLOWER	from May to July	from June to August	300
BROCCOLI RABE	from May to July	from June to August	300
SAVOY CABBAGE	from May to July	from June to August	300
TURNIP	from May to July	from June to August	300
CETRIOLO	from February to June	from March to July	30
CURLY ENDIVE	from March to September	from April to October	600
STRAWBERRY	from July to September	from August to October	500
FENNEL	from June to August	from July to September	180
CURLY ENDIVE	from June to August	from July to September	600
ESCAROLE ENDIVE	from June to September	from July to October	600
HEAD LETTUCE	from February to September	from February to October	800
EGGPLANT	from February to May	from March to June	220
MELON	from February to May	from March to June	30
OKRA	from April to July	from May to August	5-6
PEPPERS / CHILI	from February to June	from March to July	150
TOMATO	from February to May	from April to July	300
LEEK	from March to May	from April to June	380
PARSLEY	from February to September	from March to October	600
CELERY	from February to June	from March to July	2000
CELERIAC	from February to June	from March to July	2000
PUMPKIN	from March to June	from April to July	5
ZUCCHINI	from February to July	from March to August	6

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SEEDING

basics

Seedlings can be produced in several ways. Among the most commonly used are: direct sowing in the field, sowing in a seedbed, sowing in containers or sowing with the use of compressed peat pellets.

DIRECT SOWING

The direct sowing allows to produce seedlings that will germinate and develop directly in the sowing place. This method, easier and more productive, has the advantage that the plants develop directly in the field, creating deeper roots. The obtained plant does not require transplantation. To be used only for species that do not require special initial care or that do not need to be protected from frost or weather events.

SEEDING IN A SEEDBED

This technique is used to produce seedlings in sheltered housing. The seedbed consists of a dedicated space of varying, but nevertheless small, dimensions, where a protected and ideal microclimate is created. It can be located in corners well exposed to the sun of the yard or garden. In some cases it can also to be heated to allow germination and growth under optimal conditions for the seedlings.

SEEDING IN A POT

This type of sowing is used to produce seedlings that will develop in small pots or dedicated containers that will be filled with a specific substrate before sowing. It is among the methodologies that yield the best results in terms of productivity. It has notable advantages and is the most recommended. generally for all seedlings except those that will produce root vegetables, such as carrots and radishes, for which preparing the seedling is not considered advisable, but direct seeding in the field is recommended.

SEEDING IN PEAT PUZZLE OR PELLETS

Seed sowing in pellets, specially prepared with natural and fully eco-compatible material, is obtained using products based on peat or coconut fiber, dehydrated and compressed. It has notable advantages in terms of ease of use and results as the seedling will grow in a way optimally finding an immediate ideal environment for proper roots. The final result will surely be satisfactory and the seedling will not suffer particular stress due to transplanting into full soil. It is generally recommended for all seedlings except, as with pot sowing, those that will produce root vegetables for which direct sowing in the field is recommended.

THE PREPARATION OF SEEDLINGS

general instructions

WHY PREPARE SEEDLINGS STARTING FROM SEED?

It is a question that naturally arises, therefore here are the main advantages:

- Economic: with a packet of seeds you can obtain many plants. Generally a regular packet contains dozens or even hundreds of seeds and considering the cost of a single packet, the result is decidedly in favor of home production.

- **Balanced productions:** the greater healthiness of the house-produced plants also imply a better and more constant production of vegetables, closer control over the use of chemical substances and a wide choice of varieties to obtain.

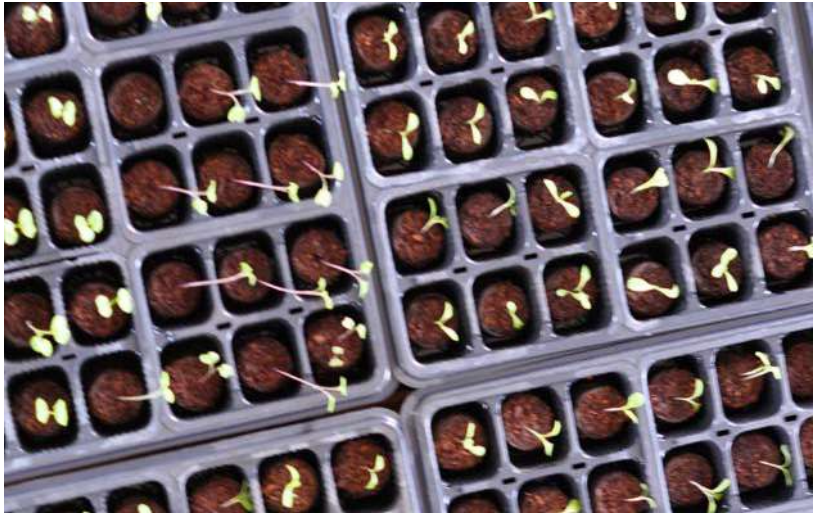
- Satisfaction: watching a seed come to life and germinate is one of the most fascinating phenomena in nature, which is why home production of garden seedlings fully completes the pleasure of a home garden and truly do-it-yourself.

- **Precocity:** early harvests can be obtained in as the seedling during the early stages of development does not slow down because it is produced in a protected environment with less stress.

In this guide we will try to treat the production of garden seedlings in a simple way, starting from sowing in a pot or container.

The main advantage in producing seedlings in a small pot is given by the possibility of starting to prepare them even if external weather conditions do not allow it since they are planted in a protected environment.

It is not necessary to have a dedicated space or who knows what dimensions. An indoor windowsill, in most cases, is sufficient to produce the plants needed for a normal family garden.



THE PREPARATION OF SEEDLINGS

SOWING

let's prepare the seedlings

THE CONTAINERS

In specialized stores and agricultural shops you can find various types of containers in different materials. Regardless of the type of container used, the preparation technique will always be the same. The choice of container must be made based on the size of the seed used as well as the time needed for the seedling to be ready for transplanting.

Today, thanks to a wide range of options, it is easy to find on the market different types of greenhouses of various sizes, even very small ones, to place, for example, on a windowsill. Heated models with suitable electric resistances are also available on the market. The only fundamental requirement is to place the greenhouse or container in the brightest area possible. In fact, light, as well as heat, are necessary elements for the good growth of the seedling. For limited production, you can use individual pots made of plastic or biodegradable material.

As for the soil, the choice is really wide, you can also find compressed peat pellets on the market, very useful and easy to use, available in different sizes and particularly suitable for seedling production. The pellets should be left for a few moments before sowing, immersed in water, so that they hydrate and are ready to receive the seed.

SOWING

There are several factors to consider at the time of sowing. In addition to the quality of the seeds, which is essential for a good result, particular attention must be paid to the sowing depth and the germination temperature. Sowing, as previously mentioned, must be done by burying the seed at the right depth to allow the sprout to root and develop properly. So, neither too deep nor too shallow. Usually, a seed should be buried at a depth equal to 2 or 3 times its own size. To sow in individual containers or with peat pellets, it is good practice to use tweezers to pick up the seed and place it inside the container.

PREPARATION OF SEEDLINGS

For to obtain the number of plants desired you should place two seeds per pot and subsequently perform a quick thinning, removing, at the appropriate time, the least developed seedling. This will prevent you from having to reseed the containers and you will surely obtain the number of seedlings you intended.

predestined. Particularly attention care must be taken during thinning: to avoid accidentally damaging the roots of the plant you decide to keep, proceed with cutting using small scissors at the base of the plant to be removed.

WATERING

Humidity must be kept under control to avoid mold formation or, conversely, a stunted growth due to too little water. Both situations will lead to weak, unhealthy seedlings with significant consequences for the final yield. That said, another important factor to consider is the caution to use in the irrigation method to avoid moving buried seeds or, worse, uncovering them from the soil, risking placing them in unfavorable conditions for their development. It is fundamental to have starting soil moist, not saturated, as it would be difficult to bury and subsequently cover the seeds correctly.

Once sowing is done, irrigate with a misting pump or a small watering can equipped with a spray head, the containers so as not to avoid creating a jet of water that's too strong, but allow the fine droplets to penetrate the soil slowly. Do not overwater. It is better to water often with a small amount than rarely with large amounts.

Germination

Place the containers in a sheltered place (an interior windowsill, for example, is one of the ideal locations) or in a small greenhouse, a tunnel, or under a cover. If you have a greenhouse or tunnel, check that careful assessment of the real need to water the young plants, since usually the environment inside can be sufficiently humid for growth. The temperature at which the containers or pots should be placed must be appropriate for the type of seed used. The rule is to keep at

protection from excessive cold for the seedlings, especially in case of early sowing and with species that are not very resistant to low temperatures.

PREPARATION OF SEEDLINGS

subsequent phases

FERTILIZATION

Yes recommends to proceed with the fertilization using specific water-soluble fertilizers to dilute in the watering water, to be distributed with a spray nozzle or a small watering can equipped with a rosette, in order to provide, from the start, the right amount of nutrients.

of nutrients to the shoot and allow it to develop in the best possible way. Fertilization will play an important role in all the stages of the plant's growth and in the subsequent growth stages after transplant. Producing healthy seedlings means having plants resistant to the various threats that can arise during the spring and summer season.

THE TRANSPLANT

Transplanting is the last operation we will cover in this small manual. It simply involves placing the produced seedlings in their final and predetermined location. The soil that will receive them must be well-worked and fertilized, in order to avoid transplant stress to the seedling as much as possible, facilitate its growth and the ensuing production of vegetables.

Before burying the plug containing the seedling, dip it in water so that the roots have the right amount, thus avoiding transplant stress. A good practice is to also immediately moisten the soil so that the moisture of the plug does not migrate to the surrounding dry areas. The transplant, burying the plug up to the plant's collar, should be carried out preferably in the late afternoon or early morning to have lower water losses during the first phases. To try to minimize any post-transplant stress as much as possible, it is good practice to remove the seedlings from the protected environment 3 or 4 days before, so they get used to the external environment.

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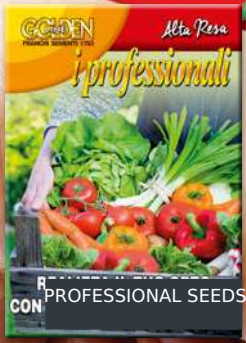

PROFESSIONAL SEEDS.

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