



Seed Germination Troubleshooting Guide

Common Problems & Solutions

Problem	Possible Cause	Fix / Best Solution
Seeds not sprouting at all	Soil temperature too low or too high	Use a heat mat for warmth-loving seeds like tomatoes , cucumbers , and watermelons . Cool-season crops like cauliflower germinate best at 65-70°F .
	Seeds too old / poor quality	Use fresh seed . Test older seeds using the paper towel method to check germination rate before planting.
	Planted too deep	Refer to the seed packet for proper planting depth. Fine seeds like strawberries need only a light dusting of seed-starting mix .
	Soil too dry	Gently mist the soil surface with a spray bottle to avoid disturbing seeds.
	Soil too wet	Ensure good air circulation and use a small fan if necessary. Cover with clear plastic but vent regularly to avoid excessive moisture.
	Hard seed coat (e.g., moringa , coffee , eucalyptus)	Soak seeds in warm water for several hours or overnight. Scarify if needed to improve germination.
	Pre-treatment needed	Strawberry seeds need cold stratification for 2-3 weeks in a plastic bag with moist peat moss in the fridge.
Seeds sprout, then die (damping off)	Fungal disease from excess moisture	Use sterile seed-starting mix or soilless mix . Ensure good air circulation with a small fan . Sterilize reused trays with a bleach solution .
	Overwatering or poor drainage	Don't let plastic trays sit in excess water . Use a spray bottle for gentle watering.
Leggy seedlings	Insufficient light	Use fluorescent lights or LED lights , positioning them 2-3 inches above seedlings. Alternatively, place in a south-facing window with good light .
	Too warm after germination	Move seedlings to a cooler spot (around 65°F) once they sprout.
Yellowing leaves	Nutrient deficiency	Begin feeding with water-soluble fertilizer after the first set of true leaves develops.
Seeds mold or rot before sprouting	Too much moisture, poor air circulation	Reduce watering and allow airflow. Use plastic domes with vents or lift plastic wrap daily for fresh air.
	Non-sterile soil	Use fresh potting mix , soilless mixes , or peat moss instead of garden soil , which may contain weed seeds and pathogens.

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