

Flowers 101 – From Seed to Vase

Care and Transplanting of Seedlings

Once your seedlings have sent roots out the bottom of the seed cell tray, it's time to transplant them. If it is too cold to be planted outside (wait until all danger of frost has passed), transplant them into 4 or 6 packs or individual pots, 3.5", if they are going to get large. Use a good organic potting soil.

Using a butter knife or tool of your choice, remove the seedling from the cell tray carefully getting all the roots if possible. Plant your plant at the same height it was in the cell tray. Bottom water and place out of the sun. Mist the top of soil. The best time to do any transplanting is in the late afternoon or evening so the plant can settle in with cooler weather at night and no direct sun. Let the plants rest overnight before placing in direct sun. You can fertilize the plants with a 1/2 strength organic fertilizer to start.

Before transplanting into the garden, you will need to harden off your plants, which means getting them toughened up to withstand weather extremes of hot and cold outside. Start with 30 minutes outside in the sun and lengthen the time each day. Leave



the plants until late evening if possible. You can use frost cloth at the beginning if needed as you

acclimate your plants to the cold. Of course, if it's really cold or storming you will need to wait until conditions are favorable to begin this process. Finally, leave your plants outside overnight (be sure they are safe from critters and those dreaded earwigs and slugs). I use Sluggo Plus in my greenhouse and garden and have had good success. I put it in the actual pot not just on the floor and benches.



To transplant outside after the plants are hardened off, again, plant in the evening. Space your plants so there is good air circulation between each plant. Water deeply (do not water the leaves as many are susceptible to pow-

dery mildew) and spread your earwig/slug bait around all plants. For protection from very hot weather use shade cloth to begin with on hoops or stakes suspended above the plants. Check your plants every day for dryness and insects. Stake or net your taller flowers. Mulch with rice straw or other material once they have grown up a bit. I like to leave them uncovered at the beginning to check for insects. Soon you will have a garden of lovely flowers to enjoy inside and out. Good luck!



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