

What Are the Different Ways to Germinate Citrus Seeds?



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I *always* have lemons in my fridge. The bright acidic quality of lemon juice adds a fantastic oomph to food that you just can't get with other kinds of acids. Lemon also pairs well

with pasta, chicken, and roasted veggies. I also often have limes on hand because they're perfect for brightening up Mexican and Thai dishes.

Of course, it's not always convenient to have a bag of lemons, limes, and other citrus fruits in your fridge. If you only cook for one person or two, they're likely to go bad before you can use them, and a lot of citrus fruit can be quite expensive at the supermarket.

So what's a foodie to do? Grow your very own citrus plants at home! It's easy to germinate citrus seeds right in your kitchen. They're not only delicious, but they're also [healthy](#)!

What you need for success

Before we dive into how to germinate citrus seeds, it's important to note that most citrus fruits don't do well in cold climates. If you plan to grow citrus indoors, you'll need a spot that gets a *lot* of sun. You should also plan to water and mist your fruit tree regularly, but never ever overwater. Waterlogging the roots of a citrus tree is one of the quickest ways to kill it.

Many citrus tree varieties are excellent container plants and easy to grow inside. If it's warm enough in the summer, feel free to move your trees outside for some sun, fresh air, and rain. Opt for dwarf varieties if you're growing inside or in a small outdoor space.

How to germinate citrus seeds

Did you know you can [germinate citrus seeds](#) from the fruit you buy at the grocery store?

To sprout those [seeds](#), remove them from the flesh and soak them overnight. Soaking the seeds helps break down the thick coating that prevents water and air from getting inside.

After soaking, it's time to plant the seeds. Pop them in some potting soil. Make sure your potting soil is moist—if it's too dry or wet, your seeds won't sprout, so you're looking for a middle ground. A general rule when planting any kind of seed is to set it to a depth that corresponds with the seed itself. Small seeds, like carrot seeds, for instance, require shallow sowing. Larger seeds, like those of citrus or [squash](#), need to be sown a little deeper.

Use plastic wrap, or a seed starting dome to cover the potting soil. This helps retain moisture. Set your potted seed somewhere sunny and warm.

Once the seed sprouts, remove the plastic. At this phase, too much moisture can create problems.

To promote continued growth, feed your lil' citrus plant every once in a while with a balanced fertilizer. Thankfully, there are quite a few citrus-specific fertilizers on the market, which makes it easy to identify the right formula for your needs.

Citrus fruit trees will take some time to bear fruit, and it largely depends on the type and variety of citrus. Once fruits appear, they also take a while to ripen. Don't pick fruits until they're ripe. Unlike tomatoes, they won't get any riper after being picked.

5 Ways to Reignite Your Passion for Gardening



It's the height of the harvest season! I've been picking ripe tomatoes and cutting fresh [flowers](#) to adorn my kitchen table almost every day. I have hot peppers coming out of my ears,

and I've been blessed with a lush crop of kale.

Funny how this time of year is also when I start to lose that gardening spark. The weather is hotter than ever, so it's unpleasant to stay outside for too long. But the worst thing about hot-as-heck August is that any failures are final. There's little time to recoup losses, and it's too late to plant much of anything substantial. It feels like the end, even though the finish line isn't anywhere close.

I know I'm not the only one who experiences a mid-season slump. So I did some brainstorming and put together some ideas to help perk you back up. Here's how to reignite your passion for gardening.

Reigniting the passion

Once you've lost the desire to garden, what are you supposed to do?

It happens. You can't be on full-speed 365 days a year. Gardening is hard work—physically and mentally. Here are a few tips to keep your mojo alive and reignite your passion for gardening:

- **Rely on Mother Nature.** It's been several months of daily watering, weeding, and pruning. Let Mother Nature take the reigns (just be sure to check the [weather](#) forecast to avoid leaving your garden during a week-long drought) and let your garden survive on rainwater for a week or so.
- **Take longer breaks.** Use this time to take longer breaks away from your garden. Spend less time examining and checking on things. Sounds odd considering I'm a huge proponent of daily garden walks, but now is the time when most of your plants are mature and capable of handling a little pest damage if left alone. They are stronger than ever before and with some time away you'll

come back with a renewed sense of wonder at what you find.

- **Focus on the harvest.** Pluck, pick and grab what you can and spend your gardening time preserving and using up what you harvest.
- **Plan for next year.** Your garden layout is fresh in your mind. You know exactly where everything is and what didn't quite work, so use that know-how to plan for next year. Write down lessons you've learned and think about what needs to change (or stay the same) for next year. Is there something you didn't plant that you should have? Did you start something too early? Too late? Which plants were infested with pests? Find ways to avoid that for next year and write it all down while it's at the forefront of your brain.
- **Do some seed trading.** Take inventory of your seed stock. What do you need to top off for next year? Chat with your gardening friends and do some [swapping](#) by mail.

I get it. This time of year is tiresome. Seeds have sprouted and the magic has sort of lost its spark a bit. It's ultra-hot and with a pandemic still going on, there's anxiety and stress about what's to come. September no longer seems like a fresh start ahead, which makes this gardening moment all the more anxiety-producing.

You've got this. Let the failures go. Embrace your accomplishments and look ahead to next year. Soon you'll be cleaning it all up and closing up shop for the winter.

5 Best Houseplants for

Frequent Travellers



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Whether you're away on business a lot, or you frequently visit family throughout the year, it can be hard to keep fussy plants alive when you're away from home. Thankfully, there are

plenty of suitable houseplants for frequent travelers.

My house is starting to resemble a jungle these days. I've been adding greenery during the pandemic because it feels comforting to bring the outdoors in, for some reason. While I'm not heading off on vacation anytime soon, I'm well aware of the challenge involved in keeping plants alive while away.

What to look for

When picking low-maintenance houseplants, there are a few things to consider, including:

- **Light requirements.** Chances are that if you're traveling often, you're not leaving your curtains open. You should choose plants that are tolerant of low-light conditions.
- **Water requirements.** Don't pick plants that need daily [watering](#) if you're someone who is away from home a lot. Choose species that don't mind (and even prefer!) if the soil dries out.
- **Disease-resistant.** If you're away often, you might not spot problems like [pests](#) and diseases early enough. Avoid these issues right off the bat by opting for disease and pest-resistant varieties.
- **Toxicity.** If you have pets, always check whether a plant is toxic before bringing it into your home. Someone who stays in your home with your dog may not realize the plants are poisonous. Likewise, if you ask someone to feed your cat every day, your kitty, when left alone, might enjoy a harmful nibble.

Best plants for frequent travelers

Here are my picks for top houseplants for frequent travelers.

Cacti and Succulents

This is a [grouping of plants](#) that require very little TLC. In

fact, being away might actually be a plus for these oft-spiky and plump plants. Neither needs much water, and overwatering can even cause deadly root rot. Your time away is likely to be beneficial to your relationship.

Spider Plant

This is a notoriously easy plant to care for. It grows quickly, looks great in a tabletop or hanging container, and doesn't mind a bit of [shade](#). The plants also produce "babies," which you can re-pot for more spider plants!

Philodendrons

I have had a heart leaf philodendron in my kitchen for five years now. I often forget to water it for weeks on end, and it never seems bothered by my neglect. It's a lovely low-maintenance plant that looks gorgeous in a hanging planter.

Snake Plants

This is one of my favorite plant varieties. Snake plants are such a visual marvel. They don't mind low light conditions, and they're very tough to kill. Don't worry about not watering for a few days or weeks, these sturdy plants can handle it.

Peperomia

These cute lil' plants are easy to maintain and come in a variety of textures and colors. They don't mind low light spaces, and they prefer for their soil to dry out between waterings. In fact, I killed my first peperomia because I overwatered it! Most of the houseplants I've murdered have met their end because I was overzealous with watering. Oops!

4 Reasons to Grow Flowers in Your Garden



Cut flowers in the garden are the height of luxury. I used to think flowers were pointless. When I was younger, I didn't find them particularly romantic, and when I began gardening, I

thought of them as wasted space. Now I know better.

There are plenty of reasons to grow flowers in your garden. Each time I plan my garden, I always save plenty of room for flowers. This year, I even set aside space for perennial flowers right inside my garden beds. Why should frugal gardeners consider growing flowers in addition to tasty edibles?

Reasons to Grow Flowers

Here are the main reasons to consider growing flowers in your vegetable garden.

Free cut flowers

Planting flowers in my veggie garden has a few advantages, but none is more rewarding than a free crop of cut flowers. When we moved into our house, I became obsessed with making space feel like a home. For me, a home is a place that's full of life, including flowers. Unfortunately, vibrant bouquets were outside of my budget. I simply couldn't afford to buy a steady supply of flowers to adorn my kitchen table or living room credenza.

Instead, I grow my own bouquets. Flower seed is a tiny initial investment (even more so for perennial varieties) that provides an abundant return. My favorite cut flowers to grow are zinnias. These annuals are easy to grow, and they literally don't stop blooming until a killing frost. I used to keep them relegated to a single spot in my garden, but now they bloom among the vegetable plants.

Natural pest repellents

My garden flowers are great for cutting and displaying indoors, but they also serve another purpose. Some blooms have [pest](#) deterring qualities that make them great companions for a litany of edible plants. Marigolds, which feature prominently

in my garden, keep away a host of annoying bugs. They're the prettiest form of pest control, and they hardly require any maintenance.

Pollinator haven

I scatter flowers throughout my garden because they look beautiful and sometimes keep away pests. They also attract a host of pollinators. Without flowers to entice pollinators, my garden would be a sad place. Bright blooms and native flowers welcome [bees](#) and butterflies. They come for food and help me out with squash and tomatillos. Without them, I would have to hand pollinate, which I've never had much success with.

Aesthetic bonus

Lastly, flowers look beautiful. You could add all sorts of expensive adornments to your garden, but growing flowers from seed is an almost-free way to add a touch of beauty to your garden. This year, my garden is overflowing with flowers. They are tucked between [kale](#) plants and bursting among tomato plants. The garden is more full of color than ever, and it's never been more beautiful!

Flowers to grow from seed

If you're not sure where to start, here are a few easy-to-grow, low maintenance flower varieties that I enjoy growing from seed:

- Zinnias
- Poppies
- Bee balm
- Hyssop
- Daisies
- Marigolds
- Coneflowers
- Sweet alyssum

- Sunflowers
-

Why You Should Test Your Soil



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Along with water and sunlight, soil is the lifeblood of a garden. Without healthy, nutrient-filled soil, plants simply won't thrive.

It's tempting to believe that spraying your garden with fertilizer will encourage lush growth. But if you're spraying without testing your soil, you may be in for trouble down the line.

Why should you test your [garden](#) soil? There are several important reasons to test your soil.

Too fertilizer is bad

If you fail to get your soil tested, you have no clue about its nutrient makeup. By adding fertilizer without knowing what nutrients are already there, you risk harming plants *and* the environment. When you add too much fertilizer, you upset the soil's delicate ecosystem.

If you toss on tons of [fertilizer](#) without checking if it's really necessary, you also risk wasting a lot of [money](#). Fertilizer is expensive! Don't bother adding any unless it's absolutely necessary. Getting a soil test might just save you money!

Too little fertilizer is also bad

If your plants miss out on nutrients, that's also bad news. But how can you help them out unless you know what they need? A soil test can provide you with essential information about which nutrients are lacking in your garden. If you know exactly what to add, you won't waste precious dollars buying the wrong kind of fertilizer.

Soil tests are informative

They not only explain the nutrient makeup of your soil, but they also tell you other valuable information. Many extension offices that provide soil testing services provide gardeners with important information regarding the composition of their soil, including the amount of organic matter present. If you're short on organic matter, you can add more to improve

the condition of your soil, which can increase its drainage and water retention properties.

A few soil testing tips

Soil testing is a bit more involved than just taking a vial of dirt and sending it off to a lab. Doing it right ensures you will receive accurate results. The more accurate the results, the less likely you are to waste money and time!

- Don't take any soil from areas that have recently been fertilized
- Take different soils samples from different spots in your garden
- Label each soil sample appropriately
- Let the soil samples air dry before mailing them

Here's a handy video on how to take soil samples for mail-in testing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_U9Z3fy0Ig

7 Tips for Getting Through a Heatwave in the Garden



It's been hotter than ever in the garden these past few weeks, and getting tasks done is no longer an enjoyable experience. Thankfully, the heat let up yesterday, and I manage to spend an hour and a half replacing empty spots and sowing seeds for a fall harvest. The respite is temporary, though. Dealing with a heatwave in the garden is tough, but not impossible.

As someone who is particularly sensitive to the heat, I detest gardening during a heatwave. It slows me down, keeps me from doing frequent garden checks, and stresses out plants. I'm incredibly diligent with watering, but I can't seem to keep up. We usually get plenty of rain all year round, but this year feels drier than ever—evidenced by raging wildfires in forested, rural parts of the province. If you need help with your lawn, check out <https://www.lawncare.net/service-areas/arkansas/>.

Some days it feels impossible to head outside. I can't abandon my garden, though, and neither can you. So what can a frugal gardener do to keep the garden alive when temperatures soar to an uncomfortable level?

Here are a few tips for getting through a heatwave in the garden:

1. **Hydrate.** It's been so hot that I've been sweating just standing in place watering the plants. All that moisture needs replacing. I make sure to fill up a water bottle and keep it close by when I'm in the garden.
2. **Avoid going out at noon.** Don't go out during the hottest part of the day. If you're not an early riser, water and check on things in the evening.
3. **Mulch.** Without [mulch](#), my plants would all be toast by now. Ultra-hot dry weather and drought have wreaked havoc on the garden. Lawns across town are crinkly messes (Boy, I'm glad I don't have a traditional lawn!). Mulch helps conserve moisture and is especially handy during times of extreme heat.
4. **Focus on essential tasks.** When it's cool outside, I spend a lot more time out in the garden just hanging out and working on things here and there. When it's super hot outside, don't dilly dally. Get right to the most important stuff (e.g., watering).
5. **Harvest early or late.** Don't harvest stuff in the middle of the day. You'll end up picking wilted, limp produce. Do it at the crack of dawn or in the evening, instead.
6. **Use shade cloth.** I'm still growing [lettuce](#) during the heatwave thanks to shade netting that keeps the sun from burning tender leaves. My lettuces are slower to bolt with the shade cloth, but it's also imperative that you select bolt-resistant varieties for summer growing.
7. **Water right.** Spraying the hose every which way isn't a productive way to water the garden at any time. During a heatwave, though, your plants are especially thirsty. Water deeply and aim the hose under your plants instead of spraying them from above.

It's possible to get your garden through a heatwave. It just takes a bit of extra patience and care. [Don't forget to take](#)

[care of yourself, too](#). If you can't handle the heat for whatever reason, ask a friend or neighbor to help you water temporarily.

I'm looking forward to more rain. Here's hoping it arrives soon!

5 Best Plants for a Privacy Wall



A little bit of privacy can turn a plain outdoor space into a cozy oasis. Climbing, vining, and towering plants are perfect natural plant privacy wall options. With a plant privacy wall,

there's no need to fuss with the extra cost of lumber, fencing, or ready-made privacy accessories. Plants are a free, simple way to keep your yard, patio, or porch hidden from prying eyes. No need to worry about heading out to water your flowers in your pajamas!

A Word of Caution

Do your homework before settling on a plant for your DIY plant privacy wall. It may seem cheap now, but if you pick an invasive species, you'll end up spending a chunk of money on getting rid of the spreading beast.

Consider also how a plant-ish privacy wall will affect other plant life nearby. Will there be enough shade to grow your favorite tomatoes next year? Will you still be able to enjoy the sunshine on your patio?

Don't forget to find out how long it takes for the plant to mature. Will it take a decade for the vine to engulf your deck's trellis? A plant that grows too quickly may turn [invasive](#). If it takes forever to spread, it'll be useless for immediate privacy purposes.

Lastly, does the plant provide privacy throughout the year? Evergreen cedars don't shed their leaves in the winter, so they act as a permanent living fence. Flowering vines, however, may wither away in the winter and fail to provide enough of a screen during the colder months. If you're not outside much in the winter, then this consideration matters little.

Best Plants for a Privacy Wall

Climbing Roses

What better way to gain privacy than with the help of

beautiful blooms? [Climbing roses](#) pair well with a variety of support structures, so they're an excellent pick for an elevated patio or deck.

Bamboo

While some types of bamboo are invasive, others aren't as high maintenance. Bamboo is a tall plant that's super easy to grow. Avoid aggressive bamboo species that send out runners. Don't take chances, though. Install an underground barrier to prevent unwanted spread. Bamboo is an excellent choice for adding privacy around a pool area. It looks tropical, but it's a lot less work to maintain than other tropical plants.

Boxwood

While [boxwood](#) won't grow super tall, it's an excellent choice for adding privacy if you don't have a standard trellis or wall. I'm wary of vining plants because of a past (very awful) experience with an invasive vine, so I love the idea of placing attractive boxwood plants in tall pots for a chic, modern, privacy wall. Since nothing in containers is permanent, you can also move around the containers should you want to open up the previously hidden area.

Fake Plants

Hey, why not? Not everyone has a green thumb, but artificial plants are gaining momentum, and more people are adding them to their indoor and outdoor living spaces. Why? They require no water, no weeding—and they last forever. If you're prone to killing plants, faux greenery might be a worthy alternative to a living plant privacy wall.

Jasmine vine

This fragrant vining plant is a gorgeous summer bloomer. It takes a while for it to spread, so it's not for those who want instant-privacy. It's also better suited for warm climates and doesn't tolerate cold weather. You'll need to start training the vines early on to ensure that the plant grows onto its support structure. [Pruning](#) is also necessary to encourage a bushy growth habit.

4 Smart Garden Devices That Save Time and Money



Manual work in the garden is sometimes gratifying, but over time the grind becomes tedious. Thankfully, there are a host of smart gardening products out there that can help save you

time and money. Which smart garden devices are worth the investment?

Here are my top 4 smart gadget recommendations for gardeners seeking to save time and spend less money on their edible plots.

Instapark Outdoor Automatic Watering Timer

I recently purchased and installed an automatic watering timer to [water](#) my front yard flower patch. This section of my garden sits under my home's roof overhang so it rarely receives any natural water and my regular hose doesn't reach that far, so it's a pain to water manually. I got some cheap irrigation hoses and connected them to this digital timer (both the hoses and timer cost under \$50) and now this perma-dry spot gets watered on a regular basis. There's a neat option to skip watering days (in case of rain), which I make sure to do so as not to waste water. The whole set up was inexpensive and it saves me loads of time in the long run. Last year, I relied on rainwater to wet this area and I lost quite a few plants, which I had spent time and money starting from seed.

Flexi Hose Expandable Garden Hose

I don't quite know what I was doing before I had this kind of hose. Now, watering is such a breeze it barely feels like a chore. Lugging around a heavy, clunky hose that's hard to put away? That's far from ideal. I'd sometimes skip watering because I hated to untangle the easily kinked hose. A flexible, expandable hose has its own challenges—it's a fair bit more delicate than a heavy-duty hose—but it's always easy to carry throughout the garden and it's a delight to put away since it shrinks down to size once drained. Just be sure to store it away for the winter to prevent the casing from cracking. While this isn't technically a smart device, I think

the design is clever enough to qualify. It has saved me time and money because it makes watering a lot easier and I haven't neglected my watering duties since getting this type of hose.

[AcuRite Wireless Rain Gauge](#)

When it comes to gardening, I rely on the weather forecast a lot. No matter how diligent I am in checking the weekly weather predictions, I can't accurately measure the amount of rain my garden gets without the help of a gadget. A plain rain gauge does the trick, but if you like smart technology, this nifty wireless device is a handy monitoring tool. It's a self-emptying collector that's useful for checking how much rainwater your garden is getting. It's also an excellent device for people in flood-prone areas. And it costs under \$50!

[Click and Grow Indoor Smart Garden](#)

This intelligent garden system is on the higher end of the price scale, but it's well worth the investment. I've grown so many herbs in this little automated garden that I never buy them at the grocery store anymore. The hydroponic unit makes it possible to grow [greens](#), herbs, and other plants indoors all year round. All you need to do is add water and harvest away!

7 Garden Inspection Tasks for Thriving Plants



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frugalgardening.com

Why do I bother walking through my garden multiple times a day? Let's talk about my top garden inspection tasks.

We're in the midst of a [heatwave](#) in my neck of the woods and the garden is loving it. The heat-sensitive plants have all bolted and been pulled in favor of heat-loving edibles. I make it a point to visit the garden at least twice every day—even when it's sweltering hot outside. I swear I was sweating just standing there while watering this morning!

No matter how hot it is, though, I make sure to get out there as much as possible.

Most important garden inspection tasks

At some point, the garden goes into autopilot mode. All that you have to do is make sure your plot gets enough water. In my region, Mother Nature helps with that quite a bit. For those with irrigation systems set up, watering is another task that's on auto.

But even if your garden is doing a-okay, you still need to check on it from time to time. Regular visits are essential for a thriving garden.

And when I talk about checking on your garden, I don't mean a quick pop-by. When I head outside to talk to my plants, I'm there for at least 10-15 minutes. My garden checks consist of thorough visual inspections.

Here are the garden inspection tasks I think are most important:

Plant stress: Are any of my plants showing signs of stress? Are they wilting? It may mean they need more water.

Signs of disease: Are leaves browning or are my plants looking sickly? The plant might have a disease. If there's any sort of visual anomaly, I also check for signs of pest activity.

Signs of pest activity: Some pests (like striped potato beetles) are easy to spot. Their orange carapaces and eggs are

easy to find among lush green foliage. Some pest eggs are hidden on the underside of leaves, so don't forget to check there. Check closely for pests even if there's no visible plant damage. Squish and remove eggs before the bugs ever have a chance to do any damage.

Water pooling: Is there an area of your garden where water tends to pool? You might need to reconsider planting in that area since most plants don't do well in waterlogged soil.

Tall plants: It's incredible how quickly plants grow at the height of the summer. I swear my [tomatoes](#) shot up several inches overnight. Tall, quick-growing plants like peppers, beans, and tomatoes need support. Upon inspection, pluck suckers from tomatoes and make sure to provide your scraggly plants with support structures like cages or bamboo poles.

Bolting: It's an unfortunate side effect of summer heat and plants require your immediate attention. Once you spot bolting, it's possible to save nearby plants that have yet to send up flower stalks by providing extra shade and mulching to cool the soil's surface. If you notice everything has already bolted, the sooner you pull everything, the sooner you can plant something new in the same spot.

Things that are ready to harvest: The more often I check on my garden, the sooner I'll notice things that are ready for [harvest](#), which helps to cut down on garden waste.

Seed Starting with Recycled

Materials



There's no need to use fancy equipment to [start seeds](#). You have plenty of perfectly suitable materials lying around the house—probably about to end up in the trash or recycling bin. Seed starting with recycled materials is easy!

Don't spend a ton of money on trays and flats. Save your hard-earned money and reduce, reuse, and recycle. A little bit of frugal know-how is all you need to germinate and sprout seeds for free.

Starting seeds now?

You might be wondering why I'm talking about seed starting when summer is on our heels. Isn't seed starting reserved for the late winter and early spring?

Of course not!

If a productive garden is what you seek, you should always

have something ready to replace harvested plants. Think of it cyclically. The wheels are always turning in the garden. If they stop, you'll have less to harvest.

Now is the perfect time to start thinking about what the fall garden will look like. It's also important to consider succession sowing.

I'll offer up an example. In the spring, I planted spinach seeds in a patch of my garden. Last week, I harvested them because they were starting to dislike the hot weather and most were mature and ready to pick. That left the squares previously occupied squares empty. Uh oh!

There are two options when this happens; one requires a bit more prep than the other.

1. Replace the harvested plant with transplants that are ready to go (which involves seed starting)
2. Sow seeds (this time of year, quick-growing plants or stuff that will be ready for harvest in the fall is ideal)

For this spot, I chose to sow [kale](#) and carrot seeds, but I also have several seedlings growing in a tray to put in the next vacated garden square.

Recycled seed starting

Okay, you're ready to prep seedlings and do some seed starting with recycled materials. Here are some free, DIY container ideas to consider:

Yogurt and applesauce cups: Small single-serve containers are ideal for starting small plants like lettuce. Use big tubs for larger plants like tomatoes.

Fruit clamshell packaging: These are perfect for seed starting because they feature built-in drainage.

Solo cups: Or any type of party or paper cup, for that matter.

Egg cartons: Don't toss these in the recycling bin. Use them to start seeds!

Drink cartons: Whether for milk or juice, cartons are great because they provide a bit more real-estate than other recycled seed starting options. Just be sure to clean the cartons thoroughly before adding soil and planting seeds.

Recycled plant trays: When you buy plants in bulk at the nursery you'll usually gain a few free plant trays in the process. If you don't have any on hand, ask around. Most people toss these out without a second thought. In the late spring, you might even find plenty of these on the curb.

Takeout containers: Next time you indulge in takeout food, don't throw away the containers. Wash them by hand (if they're sturdy enough they might survive the top rack of your dishwasher) and use them to start seeds.

A quick note that many recycled seed starting vessels don't have any drainage holes so be sure to poke a few to prevent root rot. Set your containers on some kind of tray to prevent water from pooling on the counter, table, or other surfaces.