Natural Ways To Control Fungus in Plants

Plant fungus is a type of plant disease caused by a fungal infection such as powdery or downy mildew, anthracnose, rust, and blight. Sometimes the fungi just causes your plants to look ugly. However, more often that not, it can cause serious damage to your plants. Therefore, you want to make sure that you control fungus in plants. Catch it early and get rid of it. And, of course, you probably want to do so naturally, even though there are chemical options.

What Exactly Is Fungus?

Fungus is a type of living organism that is neither a plant nor an animal. Fungi are typically characterized by their ability to grow as long, branching filaments called hyphae, which allow them to penetrate and absorb nutrients from their

environment. Some fungi also produce spores, which can be spread through the air or water to help them reproduce and colonize new areas.

Fungi themselves are not a bad thing. In fact, they can play an important role in many ecosystem. They help to break down dead organic matter and recycle nutrients back into the soil. They are also important in the production of many foods and medicines, such as bread, beer, cheese, and antibiotics. And of course mushrooms are fungi and many of us love those.

That said, some types of fungi can also cause disease in plants (and animals and humans, too, for that matter). Fungi can infect all parts of a plant, including the roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits.

Plant Problems Caused By Fungus

Some common signs of plant fungus include:

1. Discolored or wilted leaves: Fungal infections can cause plant leaves to turn yellow, brown, or black, or to wilt and droop. Leaves may also develop spots, lesions, or other unusual markings.
2. Fuzzy or powdery growth: Some fungal infections can cause a fuzzy or powdery growth on the surface of leaves, stems, or flowers. This may be a sign of fungal spores, which can spread the infection to other parts of the plant.
3. Stunted growth: Fungal infections can stunt plant growth, causing the plant to be smaller than expected or to produce fewer fruits or flowers.
4. Root rot: Some fungal infections can cause root rot, which can be difficult to detect since it occurs underground. Signs of root rot may include yellowing or wilting leaves, as well as a foul odor or soft, mushy roots.
5. Defoliation: Fungal infections can cause leaves to drop

prematurely, reducing the plant's ability to photosynthesize and weakening the plant overall.
6. Discolored or distorted fruits or flowers: Fungal infections can cause fruits or flowers to be misshapen, discolored, or otherwise damaged.

Natural Ways to Control Plant Fungus

You want to take a multi-prong approach to control plant fungus. First of all, you want to do all that you can to prevent fungus from showing up in your garden in the first place. Then, if you still find fungus on your plants, you want to get rid of it. Here are some of the best natural ways to do that:

Natural Fungus Prevention

In terms of prevention, it's really all about just keeping a careful approach to treating the plants in your garden right:

1. Good air circulation: Fungal spores thrive in warm, humid environments with poor air circulation. Avoid planting them too close together and trim away any dead or crowded foliage to keep the air circulating well. Prune back plans regularly to prevent overcrowding.
2. Proper watering: Do not overwater. Allow for proper drainage. Be consistent with understanding the different water levels each of your plants requires.
3. Soil management: Healthy soil with good drainage is key to preventing fungal infections. Use compost and organic matter to improve soil health and avoid using contaminated soil.
4. Mulch: Applying mulch around the base of plants can help to retain moisture in the soil and prevent fungal infections. Use organic materials such as straw, leaves or wood chips, which will break down over time and add

nutrients to the soil.

Natural Fungicides for Prevention:

Some of these will also help you to repair and control fungus in plants once you begin. But, start early and you can also use them as fungus prevention:

1. Baking soda: Baking soda has antifungal properties and can help to prevent fungal infections in plants. Mix 1 tablespoon of baking soda with 1 gallon of water and spray onto plants as a preventive measure.
2. Neem oil: Neem oil is a natural oil derived from the neem tree and has antifungal properties. It can be used as a preventive measure against fungal infections in plants by mixing with water and spraying onto plants.
3. Garlic: Garlic contains natural antifungal compounds and can be used as a preventive measure against fungal infections in plants. Mix 1 to 2 cloves of crushed garlic with 1 quart of water and spray onto plants.
4. Copper fungicides: Copper fungicides are natural compounds that can be used to prevent fungal infections in plants. Copper is a natural fungicide and can be found in various forms such as copper sulfate, copper hydroxide, and copper oxide.
5. Tea tree oil: Tea tree oil is a natural essential oil that has antifungal properties and can be used to prevent fungal infections in plants. Mix 2 to 3 drops of tea tree oil with 1 quart of water and spray onto plants.

Natural Ways to Control / Repair Plant Fungus

In addition to those preventive measures, there are some natural ways to control plant fungus once you see it cropping up. First, take these steps to get rid of the fungus:

1. Remove infected plant material: The first step in treating plant fungus is to remove any infected plant material. This includes leaves, stems, and fruits that show signs of infection. Be sure to dispose of the infected plant material properly to prevent the spread of the disease.
2. Prune affected areas: If the fungus has affected only part of the plant, prune away the affected areas with clean, sharp pruning shears. Make sure to disinfect the pruning shears with rubbing alcohol or a bleach solution between each cut to prevent the spread of the disease.
3. Improve growing conditions: Fungal infections often occur in plants that are stressed or have poor growing conditions. Improving the growing conditions, such as providing proper watering, improving soil quality, and ensuring good air circulation, can help the plant recover and prevent the fungus from returning.

Then add those natural fungicides into your plant care routine. Finally, also add in some beneficial microbes. For example, mycorrhizal fungi can be added to the soil as a powder or in a liquid form. Bacillus subtilis and Trichoderma can also be added to the soil as a soil drench or a foliar spray. Some others to look into include Rhizobium, Azospirillum, and Pseudomonas.

Read More:

- 5 Quick Tips To Rescue Your Plants From Root Rot
- 6 Tips To Revive Wilted Plants
- Frugal Ways to Clean and Disinfect Your Garden Plants

What Happens to Plants If You Use Enviro Ice on Them?

About one year ago, I wrote an article here about Enviro Ice. Companies use this product to keep items cold for shipping. I receive it in my HungryRoot food deliveries each month. According to the company, you can use it this nitrogen-based product to fertilizer your plants. I considered trying it. However, for reasons explained in the article, I didn't actually ever end up doing so. Nevertheless, many people have asked me what I think about using it. Therefore, I decided to scour the Internet for information from people who have tried it. Here's what I found.

Why I Haven't Tried Enviro Ice on

My Plants

I don’t keep too many plants myself. I live in an apartment in San Francisco. Moreover, I’m not great with plants. As a result, I have to be careful to follow directions exactly if I have any chance of keeping plants alive. I’m just not intuitive about it like so many other people are. On more than one occasion, I’ve called my sister, who was a plant sciences major, to ask her what one of my plants might need.

There isn’t a lot of information out there about using Enviro Ice on plants. It’s something that even the company itself seems to be studying. Therefore, there aren’t great specific instructions. In other words, I can’t find anything that says, “use this amount of Enviro Ice this often to get good results for your plants.” There definitely don’t seem to be instructions for using it on specific plants. So, even though I still get Enviro Ice every week, I haven’t tried it on any plants. Instead, I put it down my sink drain as described in my original article.

The Big Questions

I turned to the Internet to find out what people are saying about using Enviro Ice on their plants. Mostly, I scoured Reddit, although there are a few other forum and blog posts about it that you can easily find in a Google search. A few key questions came up:

What Form of Nitrogen Is In Enviro Ice?

I confess that I don’t fully understand the science behind this. However, several people online have asked what form of nitrogen or nitrogen compound this product is or contains. Apparently there are different forms of it. The company says that Enviro Ice is “nitrogen based.” However, that doesn’t give information about the form of nitrogen, which would

apparently be important for people seeking to use it on plants.

What Else Is In Enviro Ice?

This is the most frequent question. People who are going to use Enviro Ice on their plants want to know about ALL of the ingredients that might be in this product. Unfortunately, as far as I can find, we don't have this information. There are two key problems that people bring up:

- Is there anything else in the product that could harm plants, soil, or other living garden things? Presumably, the answer should be no. After all, they advertise clearly that it's safe to use in your garden. They state specifically on their website, "When thawed and diluted with water, the Enviro Ice coolant mixture is a safe, suitable fertilizer for both indoor and outdoor plants." Nevertheless, without specific information about the ingredients in the product, we just have to take their word on its safety.
- Is there anything in the product that I don't want to consume? In other words, if I'm growing fruits and vegetables that I plan to eat, is Enviro Ice safe for use? Obviously, people have a diverse range of food sensitivities. Therefore, this isn't a simple question. Either way, we don't have a clear answer on the ingredients yet.

Perhaps the Ingredients Are …

I asked ChatGPT if it could tell me what is in Enviro Ice. I'm not sure how accurate it's information was, since I couldn't find it elsewhere, but it claims: "The gel in Enviro Ice is made from a blend of natural ingredients, including seaweed extract, plant-based amino acids, and other plant-derived nutrients. "

In a thread over on Houzz, user toxcruasadr said that they couldn't find the ingredients. However, they suspect that it's "probably ammonium nitrate solution, which is just nitrogen fertilizer." Moreover, they say that the gel is probably "polyethylene glycol (PEG) which is actually a food ingredient." That's the best guess I was able to find online.

What Happens When You Use Enviro Ice on Plants?

Okay, so those are the questions that people have. Over on Reddit and around the web, I've found a few people who responded to these questions. They have tried the product on their plants and documented their experiences. The experience were varied. However, when looked at as a whole, they indicate that with proper dilution, Enviro Ice does work safely to help plants grow.

Enviro Ice Works on Plants When Diluted

User KimAlex17 shared on Reddit two years ago that it works great on their plants. They actually called the customer service number to ask about how to use it. They followed the recommendation to dilute the gel, using one gallon of water per 16 ounces of gel. They say that they have 77 happy plants.

Similarly, in the same thread, user Optimal_Cheetah3755 reports using it on a moth orchid plant. It sprouted new leaves and new roots. They say they use just 1-2 teaspoons of the gel per plant. They dilute that with water, although they didn't say how much.

In Fact, It Might Be Great For Trees

In the same thread, user ISK_Reynolds tried the product on two young indoor trees. They used three packs diluted with two gallons of water. They put this on one of the trees, but not

on the other one. The one that received the diluted Enviro Ice is thriving better than the one that did not.

Failure to Dilute Can Burn Plants and Soil

Several people reported that Enviro Ice didn't work for them. They said it burned either the plant or the soil or both. However, in all cases, it seems that they either didn't dilute the soil or didn't sufficiently dilute it.

Can You Grow Plants in Just EnviroIce?

In the same thread, user AJ_Effendi talks about trying to grow water plants in just the gel. This is atypical. Most people are using it to fertilize the soil around their plants. This user found that some cuttings have survived well in the gel. Their stems are a bit squishy but above the waterline they do grow. That said, some died. It was a mixed experiment.

Additional Links:

- 5 Reasons To Use Fish Amino Acid On Your Plants
- Does My Brown Thumb Make Gardening a Waste of Money?
- 4 Cost-Effective Organic Garden Fertilizers

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5 Quick Tips To Rescue Your Plants From Root Rot

I am prone to overwatering my plants. I suspect that this comes from growing up in the desert. That might sound counterintuitive. However, I have this reverence for the magic of water as a result of my desert upbringing. And so

subconsciously I tend to think that water will solve all plant problems. Which, of course, is not true. In fact, overwatering contributes to one of the most common causes of plant death: root rot. Luckily, you can prevent this problem once you're aware of it. Moreover, if you catch it early enough, you can rescue your plants from root rot.

What Is Root Rot?

Do you have a plant that doesn't seem to be growing properly despite watering it regularly? Are the leaves wilting even though the soil is wet? Do the stems feel mushy to the touch? How about the roots – if you look at them, are they the right color? Or are they more of a red-brown shade than they ought to be? Finally, how does the soil smell? If it smells "off" and you see these other symptoms, chances are that you have root rot.

As the name suggests, the roots of your plant are rotting away. Root rot is actually a disease. Blossom Plant explains that it has two common causes: overwatering and harmful fungi. In my case, it's usually been due to overwatering, as I explained. However, even if you are great at watering your plants properly, they may develop root rot as a result of the growth of bacterial fungi.

Sadly, once you start seeing the symptoms of root rot described above, it might be too late to rescue your plants from root rot. However, it's worth a try. Caught early enough, there are definitely things that you can do to save your plants.

5 Quick Tips To Rescue Your Plants From Root Rot

The most important thing that you can do is to keep a close eye on your plants. This way, you catch problems early. If

caught early, try these five things to rescue your plants from root rot:

1. Carefully Cut Away the Rotting Roots

You can't actually "cure" root rot. In other words, you must remove the roots that are rotting. In order to do this, you will have to carefully remove the plant from the soil. Then, you will have to remove the soil from the roots as much as possible. This allows you to look at the roots. Hopefully, plenty look thriving, meaning they are vibrant, white, and beautiful. The ones with root rot will look stringy and brown, as though they are dying – because they are. Alternatively, they may be a grey color and may feel slimy to the touch. Carefully cut away all of the rotting roots. You should cut just slightly above the damaged part. Maintain as many healthy roots as possible.

2. Carefully Cut Away the Dying Leaves

Cutting away the rotting roots is the most important part of rescuing your plant. However, you don't want to leave other dying parts of the plant either. After all, you want to give your plant the best chance of survival. You want healthy roots to support the healthy growth of the rest of the plant. Therefore, you will also want to trim away all of the dying leaves on your plant. Be selective – trim away what you're sure is dying but leave what might potentially grow well.

3. Repot Your Plant in Fresh Soil

Regardless of the cause of root rot, the soil is now a problem. If you've overwatered it, you can certainly let it dry out. Nevertheless, it's not healthy enough to support the full healing of your plants. Of course, if bacteria is the cause of your root rot, then you want to get rid of the soil that has that bacteria, right? So, it's time to get rid of all of that soil. Remove as much of it as you safely can from the

roots of the plant. Get rid of all soil that is in the pot. Get fresh, healthy, new, dry soil and repot the plant.

4. Skip the Fertilizer for Now

Plants in a Box explains that your plant is fragile from root rot. Therefore, you don't want to add the stress of fertilizer right now. Instead, just make sure that you use high-quality soil for repotting. Then hold off on fertilizer for the time being. Give the plant time to revive.

5. Review Your Plant's Proper Care

Even if you think that you know your plants well, it's worth it to refresh your memory. Do a little bit of research into exactly what the best conditions are for this plant to thrive. Pay careful attention to the watering instructions, of course. But also look at the sunlight it needs, the temperature it does best in, etc. You want to give your plant as much TLC as possible while it's working to heal.

How to Prevent Root Rot in the Future

Although you can do these things to try to rescue your plants from root rot, sometimes it just isn't going to work. Once you start seeing the signs of a rotting plant, it might be too late. Therefore, preventing root rot is really the way to go. Do all that you can to prevent it in the future so that you don't have to try to save your plants down the line.

Some of the key ways to prevent root rot include:

- Remember to check exactly what conditions are best for each particular plant.
- Be careful not to overwater your plants.
- Use the right soil to get proper drainage for each

plant.
- Also, use the right pot, preferably with drainage holes, to prevent standing water.
- Check your plants regularly. Pay attention to how they look, how they smell, and what the soil is like. Catch problems early on.

Related Posts:

- Tips to Prevent Winter Plant Damage
- 5 Ways to Reduce Water Usage in the Garden
- Cheap Ways to Improve Garden Soil

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5 Benefits of Starting a Garden

Starting a garden is a great way to bring nature into your home. Not only can you enjoy the beauty of budding flowers and lush green foliage, but you can also reap the many health benefits that come with having a garden. Here are some of the ways in which starting a garden can improve your overall well-being.

1. Increased Physical Activity

Caring for a garden requires tending to it on a regular basis, which means that you will have to engage in physical activity such as digging, planting, harvesting, and weeding. This can help keep you active and fit even when you don't have time for a traditional exercise routine.

In addition, gardening can be a great way to enjoy outdoor activities with friends and family. Whether it's planting new

flowers or harvesting fresh produce, you can get the whole family involved in your garden endeavors. Getting a healthy dose of sunlight can also help boost your mood and reduce stress levels. Gardening gives you the perfect opportunity to get some quality time in the sun, as long as you remember to use sunscreen!

2. Stress Relief

Gardening can help reduce stress levels as it is an activity that encourages mindfulness and being in the present moment. According to a study done by the National Council for Biotechnology Information, 60% of people said they would enjoy partaking in group art therapies. Like art therapy, gardening is a creative activity that can help you feel calm and relaxed.

In addition to physical and stress-relieving benefits, gardening also provides mental health benefits. Working in the garden can have a calming effect. It's an opportunity for you to escape from your day-to-day worries and just focus on your beautiful garden.

3. Help Promote Better Mobility

Only 4% to 5% of personal injury cases go to trial, with 95% of personal injury claims settled pre-trial in the United States. If you've recently suffered an injury, gardening can help you regain your mobility and strength. Simple activities like pruning, weeding, and harvesting can improve your balance, range of motion, muscle strength, and flexibility.

If you're having trouble getting strength for mobility, gardening can help you get your strength back. It also encourages physical activity, which is great for those who have been inactive due to injury or illness.

4. Increase Home Value

According to HomeLight, properties sold by owners sell for roughly 6% less than homes sold by agents. However, if you have a lush garden in your backyard, it can boost the value of your home significantly. A well-maintained garden adds curb appeal to any property and can help make your house more attractive to potential buyers.

Furthermore, if you're able to grow some of your own food, it adds even more appeal for buyers seeking a sustainable lifestyle. A garden can be an asset to any homeowner and is an excellent way to increase the value of your home. However, achieving a beautiful and aesthetic garden requires consistent effort in maintenance and upkeep.

You can find tree specialists on websites like https://www.mmtreecutting.com/, or choose to do it yourself if you have the time and expertise. Remember, maintaining a beautiful garden involves regular care, including watering, pruning, weeding, and fertilizing. Investing time and effort into your garden's upkeep can pay off in the long run by enhancing the overall appeal and value of your home.

5. Improve Your Diet

Having a garden allows you to grow your own nutritious vegetables and herbs. This means that you can enjoy fresh produce right from your backyard, without relying on store-bought items that may not be as healthy or organic. By growing your own food, you can also save money on grocery bills since homegrown vegetables are generally cheaper than store-bought produce. In addition, you might be encouraged to cook more from scratch, which can be a great way to improve your overall diet.

Overall, having a garden is a great way to improve your health and well-being. Not only does it provide physical benefits

such as increased physical activity, stress relief, and better mobility, but it can also provide mental health benefits. Additionally, having a garden can help increase the value of your home, making it an even more attractive asset for potential buyers. So don’t hesitate to start your own garden, you won’t regret it!

Low Maintenance Plants to Jumpstart Your Gardening Journey

Low-maintenance plants and gardens are great ways to start your gardening journey.

Some plants can produce tons of food with minimal effort from you, especially if you set your garden up to be low-effort from the beginning.

First, I will explain how to set up a low-effort garden, and then I will give you some ideas for low-effort plants.

Low Effort Gardens

A low-effort garden starts with a good plan.

First, pick plants with similar soil needs like pH balance, water, and nutritional needs.

Second, arrange them so beneficial plants are close to each other. Companion planting is a great way to use plants to benefit each other and grow big, tasty veggies.

Third, use preventative measures to keep weeds and pests out.

You can buy weed fabric (or several layers of newspaper) that you put down around your plants to block light from reaching the soil and preventing weeds.

And don’t squish wolf spiders or other predatory insects that will eat the herbivorous insects you don’t want in your garden.

Fourth, automate your watering. Using a drip irrigation system allows for more even water distribution, saves water and money, and allows plants to absorb the water very efficiently.

Basil growing in a plastic cup!

Low Maintenance Plants

Growing these veggies will be easy and fun, plus they will make old recipes seem new because homegrown is much tastier.

Herbs

Most herbs are easy to grow, and some are adapted to thriving in the harshest climates, so they can easily overgrow their patch. Try growing them in containers to prevent this.

And growing them in containers means you can put them close to your kitchen so you can just snip some off the plant when needed.

Remember that when cooking with fresh herbs, you need much more than when cooking with dried. This is because the herbs will lose volume as they cook, resulting in the concentration of the flavors.

Beans

Beans are nitrogen fixers and beneficial to the soil, meaning you don’t have to fertilize for nitrogen as much if you plant beans.

You can also sprout beans and eat the sprout. This means that you can germinate the seeds, which can be done on a wet paper towel in a dark area, and put them on a sandwich or in a salad.

Leafy Greens

Lettuces, kale, and spinach are easy to grow in cool weather, so plant these in early spring and enjoy fresh, crisp salads all spring.

When you want to eat, pluck off some outer leaves while leaving the center and roots in the ground.

Peppers

Peppers of all varieties are easy to grow annually and produce fruit for several weeks.

Young transplants are common and cheap at nurseries every spring, or you can direct sow the seeds to avoid the work of transplanting.

Just ensure there are enough days left for the plant to complete the growing cycle. You can find this information on the back of the seed packet.

Conclusion

Low-maintenance plants and gardens are great for producing food without breaking your back. What would you add to this list?

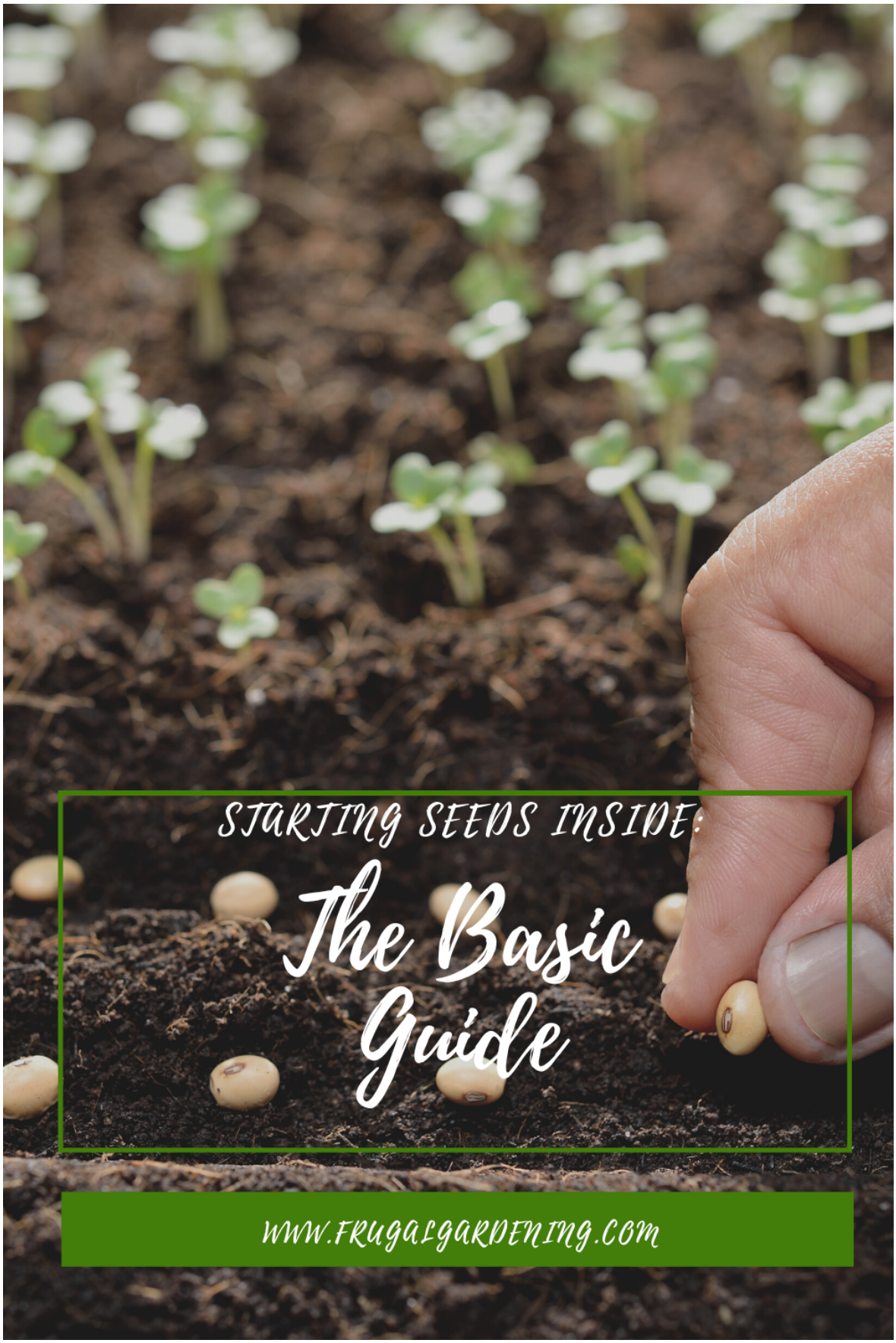
Read More:

[Good Bugs in the Garden]

[Winter Garden Tasks]

[Tips to Prevent Winter Plant Damage]

Starting Seeds Inside: The Basic Guide



This is the time of year my family would begin starting seeds inside. The first week of February was about dreaming of summer by fixing the soil in seedling trays. The next several

weeks brought tiny little plants that always fascinated me.

This post will teach you the basics of seed starting and give you a list of great veggies to germinate before planting.

Germinating Seeds

Germination is the process by which a seed leaves dormancy and begins to grow. Many people like to eat these young plants as sprouts or microgreens.

When Should You Start Your Seeds?

This will depend on 2 factors: where you live and what you are starting. The general rule is to start most veggies 8 weeks before your area’s last frost date, but some have unique requirements.

How to Start Your Seeds

You only need a few things: a container, a medium, seeds, and water. Then, follow the directions on the back of the seed packet for individualized instructions on the best methods for starting those seeds.

The Container

The container can be a special seed starting, pot, or even a

milk jug. The criteria you need to meet is the container needs to be easily covered. In addition, the humidity must be high at the beginning of the germination process, but you must remove the cover as the seedlings grow.

The Medium

Your medium can be peat moss mix, simple soil, or a paper towel. The most crucial part is that it keeps an even dampness. So you want it to hold a decent amount of water without staying wet to prevent mold.

The Seeds

Seeds that are from the previous year will have the best germination rates. Older seeds may germinate, but it could take longer, and fewer seeds will start to grow.

Water

Once you secure the seeds in the medium, you must use enough water to keep the soil damp but not wet. Overwatering can cause mold to grow.

Finishing Your Seeds

Cover your container with transparent plastic to keep the moisture and heat in to encourage the best conditions for germination. As your seedlings grow, you will need to remove the cover altogether. A few weeks before transplanting, you will need to set the seedlings outside for progressively longer times. This “hardening off” process lets the plant get used to the sun without sunburn.

Best Veggies to Start Inside

The following are just a few of the best veggies to start inside.

Tomatoes and Peppers

They easily germinate and take bout 6-8 weeks to be ready to transplant outside. These are super popular among gardeners, so you can find many varieties. Just sow in seed starting mix, water lightly, and place in a sunny spot.

Cucumbers and Melons

Another group of easily germinated plants, these don’t have as many varieties as tomatoes and peppers, but you will have no problem finding tasty ones that fit your needs. These also take 6-8 weeks to be ready for transplanting. Sow like tomatoes and peppers.

Lettuces

Sow in peat most a few weeks before the last frost date in your area. Then, place the container in a sunny window and transplant it as soon as the ground can be worked.

Conclusion

Starting your own seeds can save you money versus buying transplants. So what seeds do you start inside?

Read More:

[10 Techiques to Increase Gremination Rate]

[10 Reasons Your Plants Don’t Germinate]

[Do I Really Need to Start Seeds Indoors]

Packing Plants for Transport

Packing plants for moving or shipping can feel daunting. Yet, you put so much care and effort into these beings that you can’t imagine them being damaged during transport.

I will show you how to pack seeds, cuttings, bare-root plants, and whole plants for transport.

Transporting Seeds

Seeds are the easiest things to transport.

Start with clean, dry seeds. It is vital that they are dry. Wet seeds may begin to germinate or grow mold.

Then pack them in a paper envelope labeled with the type of seed and year.

Last, pack the envelopes into a plastic box or another waterproof container to keep them dry during the journey.

Transporting Cuttings

Taking a cutting is one of the easiest ways to propagate plants.

If you are shipping or moving with a cutting, you can easily pack it to protect it.

First, you must wait to cut it off the mother plant as close to leaving as possible. Then, cut in a diagonal line to allow for maximum water transfer from packing materials.

Then you want to remove most of the leaves on the cutting. This reduces the energy needs of the cutting so that it can stay alive longer.

Next, you want to wrap the cut end of the plant in a damp paper towel or sphagnum moss. It is essential to make sure the towel or moss is only damp. Too much water may let mold grow during the transport process.

Fourth, you need to put the cut end and wet towel into a plastic bag, but do not place the leaves of the cutting into the bag.

Fifth, tape the bag closed to keep the water in, then tape the bag and stem of the cutting to the side of the box you will be shipping it in. This will help keep the plant still, ensure the cut end stays wet, and prevent damage to the stem and leaves.

Lastly, fill the rest of the box with soft packing material, like sphagnum moss, to help absorb shocks during the rough parts of shipping.

Protip: If you are traveling with your cuttings, it is a good idea to keep them handy, so you can check the water levels and for damage.

Transporting Bare-Root Plants

Trees, shrubs, and bushes are usually sold as bare-root plants. This means they are dug up once they are dormant and then prepared for transport.

Dormancy is when deciduous plants do not grow and lose their leaves. It usually happens during winter, although we can use artificial lighting setups to force dormancy.

If you are transporting a bare-root plant, you need only to remove as much dirt as possible.

Then wrap the roots in slightly damp burlap. You want only enough water to keep the roots from drying out completely. Remember, too much water can compromise your plant and cause damage to the plant or allow mold to thrive.

Next, you need to trim the shoots of the plant. Trim them enough so they easily fit into the space you will use to transport them.

If you are shipping them in a box, secure the wet burlap in plastic, then tape the plastic bag and shoot to the side of the box. Then fill the container with soft packing material like sphagnum moss.

Transporting Whole Plants

Packaging whole plants for transport is relatively easy.

First, you need to make sure they are in the appropriate pot. The pot needs to be the right size and plastic so it won’t break from hard shocks during shipping. Bonus points: If the pot is slightly flexible, you can squish multiple pots together to fit them into tight spaces.

Next, you need to protect the foliage.

The easiest way is to wrap the plant in plastic, burlap, or netting. Start at the base of the plant and wrap up, so all the foliage points up. Do not wrap tightly as you will damage the vegetation. Instead, keep a loose wrap so the plant can move with the transport stress.

Conclusion

If you are shipping plants, check with your local post office because you may need to label the box in a particular way.

Shipping or moving with plants is stressful, but with a bit of prep, you can do it in a way that protects your plants.

Have you ever received a shipped plant before? I have. It was a beautiful cutting of a variety of Pothos houseplant.

Read More:

[Companion Planting: A Brief Guide]

[Best TikTok Gardening Channels]

[New Year’s Resolutions for Gardeners]

Top 8 Edible Plants You Can Grow in Winter

When temperatures start to drop, many people think gardening has to stop. That’s not true. Here are the top 8 edible plants you can grow in winter.

Tons of edible plants can survive winter temperatures, rain, and poor soil drainage conditions. And purple varieties, in particular, contain a compound (anthocyanin) that helps prevent root rot in wet soils.

Below, I have divided the vegetables into ultra-hardy and semi-hardy categories. Ultra-hardy plants can survive heavy frosts and temperatures below 28□. Semi-hardy plants can survive light frosts and temperatures between 28-32□.

Ultra-Hard Vegetables

Spinach – Growing spinach in the winter may result in sweeter leaves. This is because the plant produces more sugar and stores it in the vascular network in the leaves. It keeps the plant from experiencing freeze damage.

Garlic – Garlic is more adapted to cold weather, so fall-planted crops need much less care than spring-planted crops. The bulbs also grow bigger since the soil conditions are optimum. Also, choose hardneck varieties as they do better in the winter than softneck varieties.

Rhubarb – Rhubarb is a cold-loving plant and doesn’t grow well in warmer temperatures. In fact, temperatures must be under 40□ for the perennial to come out of its dormancy. Also, only the leaf stalks of the plant are edible, so don’t eat the leaves.

Austrian Winter Pea – Easy to grow in large quantities, you can cut off young shoots for salads and stirfry or wait until they develop pods around springtime. And these peas are nitrogen fixers which means they can use nitrogen from the air to produce nitrogen compounds that increase nitrogen levels in the soil.

Semi-Hard Veggies

Beets – Beets will go to seed if the temperatures get too cold, so do your best to harvest them before hard frosts (under 28□). However, growing your beets in cooler temperatures of fall and winter will result in sweeter beets because the roots store sugar to help prevent freeze damage.

Parsnip – Parsnips are another vegetable that gets sweeter when left in the soil over winter. And it is easiest to grow them from seed, but the seeds do not germinate well if they are more than a year old, so get fresh seeds every year.

Lettuce – Lettuces come in wide varieties and colors, so you can probably find tasty varieties that you can grow in your winter climate. Many gardeners use cold frames or hoop houses to negate the slower growth rate of winter.

Cabbage – Cabbage is a cool weather crop which means it does well in cool weather, but if you want to grow it in a frigid climate, you may need to add some protection from the cold like mulch, covering the heads, or a cold frame or hoop house.

Conclusion

Because temperatures are low and the sunlight is limited, growing winter gardens means your plants will show a slower growth rate than growing these plants in the spring or fall. Be patient and consistent, and spring could bring a sweet harvest!

These were the top 8 edible plants you can grow in winter. What do you like to grow in the winter? Leave me a comment below to start a conversation!

The Best TikTok Gardening Channels

Tiktok is a great place to feel community. And #gardentok does

not disappoint. Below is a list of the Tiktok Gardening channels!

Gardening with Goo

Gardening with Goo follows Goo and his garden! He constantly grows tasty-looking veggies and spreads real know-how by sharing his experiences.

Growing with Gertie

Gertie (aka Katie) shares top-tier gardening tips and recipes like vegan nacho cheese to make with your harvest.

Hook and Garden

Hook and Garden is full of gardening tips and tricks and bee-keeping adventures.

Planted in the Garden

This channel follows Char and Marv as they grow gardens, make herbal remedies, and cook delicious-looking recipes.

Carmen in the Garden

Carmen is a charming young woman who loves to garden and cook.

Gardenary

Gardenary shares many raised bed gardening tips, winter gardening tips, and general gardening tips.

Bonus Channels

These channels aren’t vegetable gardening per se, but I have to include them because they offer a lot of excellent plant knowledge and can improve your gardening.

Native Plant Tok

Kyle Lybarger is a forester and native plant enthusiast. He introduces his audience to beautiful native plants that play essential roles in their ecosystems. And he even suggests native alternatives to invasive ornamental plants.

Alexis Nikole aka Black Forager

Alexis Nikole is a very knowledgeable food forager. She takes you into her community, where she harvests and uses local plants and fungi in delicious recipes. She talks about recognizing edible wild foods, cooking safely, and their importance in cultural history. My favorite video is on the Poke plant.

In my opinion, these are the best Tiktok gardening channels. Did you see your favorite TikTok Gardener on our list? Who did we miss?

Companion Planting: A Brief Introduction

Companion planting is the practice of planting certain plants close to each other that benefit one another.

It’s an easy way to reduce garden labor, use less fertilizer, and grow healthy plants.

Companion Planting: Sources are Important

Before I give you some tips for companion planting, I caution that a significant portion of companion advice on the internet needs to be backed up by science. Some of the advice comes from folklore, people’s personal experiences, or tradition. Other advice is straight-up quackery.

Botanists and agricultural scientists are exploring which companion planting combinations offer benefits. They are finding great pairings that can reduce insect activity, share nitrogen, and improve soil quality.

Carefully review your sources before companion planting to ensure you don’t accidentally sow plants that are detrimental to each other too close to one another.

Classic Example of Companion Planting: Three Sisters Grouping

For generations, several groups of indigenous cultures of the Americas would plant corn, beans, and squash together. This grouping is called The Three Sisters because they do better when grown together.

Beans are nitrogen fixers, meaning they can absorb nitrogen from the environment and then secrete excess nitrogen as compounds that other plants can use.

The giant leaves of the squash prevent sunlight from reaching the soil, keeping the roots cool and preventing weed growth.

And the strong corn stalk is the perfect stake for growing

beans.

This is a perfect example of how growing certain plants together can support each other and reduce the need for human labor in the garden.

Helpful Companion Planting Pairings

Below I outline a few beneficial companion pairings. If you have anything to add to the list, please leave us a comment below!

Cucumbers and Tomatoes

Cucumbers act as living mulch to prevent weed growth.

This happens in 2 ways.

First, the broad shape and size of the cucumber leaves block out the light preventing germination of weed seeds. This also help keep the roots cool.

Second, cucumber roots excrete allelpathic compounds that keep weed seeds from germinating. This means that you should not sow tomato seeds among cucumber plants, but instead transplant seedlings.

Green Beans and Potatoes

Green beans fix small amounts of nitrogen that it shares with the potato plants, increasing the size of the potatoes.

You can achieve this outcome in 2 ways. You can plant alternate rows of potatoes and green beans or you can plant alternate plants in the same row.

Sweet Alyssum and Lettuce

Sweet Alyssum attracts flies and wasps that feeds on aphids

and other small insects. Plant sweet alyssum in the rows between the rows of lettuce or as a border around your lettuce patch.

Bonus Plant: Marigolds

Marigolds don’t get enough credit. They are cheap, beautiful and help deter tons of harmful bugs like aphids because marigolds attract beneficial insect like parasitic wasps and ladybugs. They may also secrete compounds that help protect the roots of nearby plants from parasites.

Conclusion

Companion planting is a great way to reduce labor and grow healthier plants, but it is a discipline that does not have a lot of scientific research available so be ware of suspicious advice.

Read More:

[Tips to Prevent Winter Plant Damage]

[Gardens Add Life and Equity to Your Home]

[Troubleshooting the Seed Starting Process: Using Old Seeds]