

Grow with us!

May 2022

Welcome to the seed library family!

It all started when you checked out your seed packages from the Prince George Public Library or our table at the Farmers Market. What an adventure we are going to embark on. We will grow together and learn together how to make our community more food and seed secure. Whether you are a new or "old" at the craft of seed saving, we welcome you.

This project is supported by many community members that are willing to share their knowledge and welcome you to the experience of seed saving. The Prince George Public Library and the Prince George Master Gardeners are eager to make this first year of the seed library a success. The David Douglas Botanical Garden Society has also accepted the challenge for ongoing support. Thanks also go to the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

We will send you a monthly newsletter with updates, upcoming workshops, and resources. We want this to be our connection as the season progresses. Hopefully some of these events will be in person events. Our sincere thanks to the many volunteers who helped fill and label numerous seed packages. We could not have done it without you!



DAVID DOUGLAS
BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY



The Prince George
Public Library

the Prince George Community Seed Library is a community partnership with financial support from

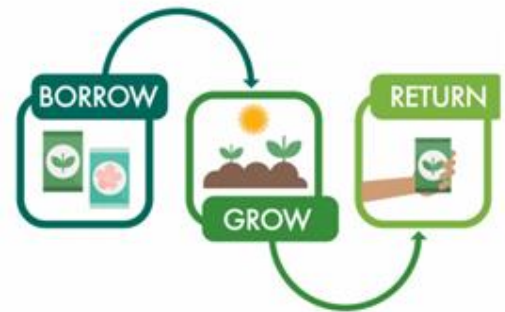


**TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation**



Tomatoes – from seed to transplant

If you haven't started your tomato seeds there is still time... but do it sooner rather than later. Tomatoes are a long-season, heat loving plant that does NOT tolerate frost. That is why it is suggested to start tomatoes, 6-8 weeks before our last frost date. The average last frost date for P.G. is May 21-May 31. However, be careful if there is a full moon at the beginning of June as this can bring us a frosty night or two!



To start your tomatoes you will need the following: seeds (which you have obtained from our Seed Library!), potting mix for seed starting (do not use garden soil as it is too heavy, has poorer drainage and may harbor diseases that will affect your seedlings), small pots, (these can be biodegradable pots, seed starting trays, small clean yogurt containers etc.), a warm place to set them (or a heat mat if you have one!), and a window with lots of natural light (or better yet a grow light or two.) If you are using recycled containers make sure they have holes in the bottom for drainage and that they are sterilized.

Tomatoes germinate best if temperatures are 70-75 F (21-24 C.) If you do not have a heat mat make sure they germinate in a warm spot, such as on top of your fridge.

1. Prepare your pot for planting by adding your seed starting mix. Moisten the soil before you plant your seed.
2. Plant 2-3 seeds per pot (you will thin them later.) Cover with 1/4" of soil (or according to seed packet directions) and *gently* press into the soil. When all seeds are planted you can use a plant mister or dribble water to ensure seed to soil contact. You just want to moisten them-not soak them.
3. Next place your planted pots on your heat mat or warm spot. If your pots came with a cover please place it on now. This helps hold the moisture in. If you do not have a cover you can cover your pots with plastic wrap. It should take about 7-14 days for the tomatoes to sprout. Keep a close watch on them as you want to remove the cover once they have sprouted. Once sprouted they should be removed from the heat mat as they now prefer cooler temperatures.
4. Tomatoes now require a good light source to keep them from getting leggy. Keep your seedlings moist but not wet. A small fan in the room with your seedlings will help with air circulation and reduce damping off and it will give your tomatoes stronger stems.
5. Once your seedlings are at least 3 inches tall and have their first true leaves, use scissors to prune away all but the healthiest seedling.

6. They are now ready to repot into larger containers. Bury your plants into the soil in the larger pots (4"-6" size) up to the first set of true leaves. This will give them greater root growth for a sturdier plant. *Photo shows one 4 week old tomato buried deeper in a larger pot*
7. Continue to keep them watered regularly and rotate daily if using a sunny window. If using grow lights, maintain a distance of about 2 inches.



When all danger of frost is past and the night time temps are 7-10 C, it is safe to transplant your tomatoes outdoors. However, they must be hardened off first. This means putting them outdoors for an hour or two a day and steadily increasing their time outdoors. It can take a couple weeks to get them fully hardened off.

Tomatoes like a fertile, well drained soil that is high in organic matter. Compost is king! Once planted outside in a sunny location, tomatoes still require regular watering. If you allow them to dry out and then super-soak them with water, your tomatoes can suffer from blossom end rot. Keep them moist but not wet. You can also add a bit of bone-meal and organic fertilizer to the hole when transplanting. This, along with regular watering can help combat this disease. *Christiane Hirt, Master Gardener*

For further information on growing tomatoes and other plants please join us at our upcoming workshop!

>>> Ready, Set, Grow

>>> next workshop is May 10, 2022

If you chose pepper seeds from the Seed Library, here are a few things you may need to know...

Although it is recommended that peppers be started 8-10 weeks before transplanting outside after our last frost. If you plan to grow them to maturity in pots, it is not too late to start now! By growing in your peppers in pots, you will be able to bring them into your greenhouse, garage or even into your house once the cooler temperatures hit in the early fall.

Starting peppers is much like starting tomatoes. Peppers germinate best if a heat mat is used, they germinate best at 77-90 F (25-32C.) They can take 2-5 weeks to germinate, so be patient!

1. Plant in seed-starting mix in small pots. Moisten the soil first.
2. Plant seeds 1/4" deep, 2-3 per pot.
3. Cover and keep warm and moist.
4. Once germinated remove the cover and give them lots of light.
5. When your seedlings have about 6 leaves they are ready to repot from their small pots into about a 4" pot. This is when they should be thinned to one per pot.
6. As they continue to grow, they should gradually get repotted into larger size pots. The final pot size for growing them outdoors in pots should be 10"-12". Peppers prefer a well drained, rich organic soil that is slightly acidic (pH 6.0-7.0).
7. They will need to be **hardened off** gradually before being left outside to grow. Do not put your peppers outside permanently until at least 3 weeks after our frost-free date. To thrive they require a soil temperature of 60F (16C).
8. Alternatively, you can transplant these plants into your greenhouse if you have one. They should be planted 18"-24" apart or they can be kept in their large pots in the greenhouse.
9. For best results feed with an organic fertilizer that is high in potassium as this will help set on flowers. Too much nitrogen will give you a nice plant but little fruit.
10. Peppers like to be evenly moist. They can be allowed to dry out *slightly* between watering, but they do not like to have wet feet.
11. In the early fall and before any frost you can move your pots indoors to allow your peppers to mature.

Karen Pitcher, Master Gardener

Did you know... Each plant has a different germination time. These photos show the size of a gypsy pepper plants (7 cm) and echinacea flowers (4 mm) at 4 weeks.



Photos by Nicola Focht, Master Gardener in training

Upcoming events:



Ready, Set, Grow Workshop

May 10, 4-5 pm, Prince George Public Library

Did you borrow seeds from the **Prince George Community Seed Library** but are unsure where to start? Join the **Prince George Master Gardeners** as they walk you through the basics of gardening from seeds. Learn tips and tricks to help you successfully plant your garden.

This workshop is aimed at beginning gardeners, but, if you are more experienced we welcome you to enrich the knowledge sharing.

David Douglas Botanical Garden Tomato plant sale, choose from a wide variety of colours, sizes, shapes, and flavours >>> **May 7th, Farmers Market, 8 am – 2 pm**

DDBGS one day Plant Sale, May 12th, over 120 varieties, >>> online sale,
<https://www.ddbotgarden.bc.ca/news/62/20/David-Douglas-Botanical-Garden-Society-Online-Plant-Sale-May-12th>.

DDBGS Spring Plant Sale, May 22nd, this annual event is one you do not want to miss. There will be an incredible selection of annuals, perennials, flowers, vegetables, grasses, trees, shrubs, etc.

>>> **May 22nd, UNBC, Parking Lot A/DDBGS Compound, 10 am – 2 pm**