

# Kids Can Grow



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## What do Plants Need?

The warmth and light of the sun give plants energy. Put your indoor plants in a sunny window. Put your outdoor plants in a sunny spot. Since some plants like it warmer than others, be sure to learn about each one and find the perfect spot for it to grow.



Seeds need water to start growing and plants need it to keep growing. Since water is so important you have to check every day. When the soil feels dry, use a watering can or a gentle sprayer until the soil feels as damp as a wrung out sponge.

If you use too much water, the soil will get soggy or muddy and your plant could drown! If you're not gentle when you water, the soil could wash away.

Plants also need air just like we do but they breathe it through their leaves and roots. Their leaves can always breathe easily but their roots have to be in loose soil.

Plants need to eat too! Their roots get nutrients from the soil. Adding compost or old manure to the soil can help feed your plants. You can also buy a fertilizer to feed your plants. Make sure you follow the directions. Just like you, too much food can be a bad thing for a plant.

## How to Start Seeds

Seeds can be started in a container or in the ground. The steps to take are almost the same.

If you decide to use a container there's a huge variety to choose from! Take a look at your recycling bin to see if you can reuse a container. You must put a few holes in the bottom so the water can drain. For seeds that won't be in containers long (ex. lettuce, beans, peas) you can use toilet paper rolls or egg cartons.



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When you plant the seeds in the soil, make sure you follow the directions on the package. Some seeds are planted deep and others are barely covered with soil. Pat the soil lightly and water carefully. Don't make puddles!

Check the soil every day and water when it feels dry on the surface. If you planted your seeds in a container, put it in a sunny window when the seeds sprout. After your seeds have a few leaves, watch them as they grow. If they are too crowded, get a small pair of scissors and snip off the smaller plants at the soil surface so the ones left have room to grow. This is called thinning your plants.



**Frost Warning!** If you're moving your plants outdoors make sure it isn't freezing at night. Listen to the weather forecast to make sure there is **no** risk of frost. Usually late May is a safe time to have most plants outside in Parry Sound.

### How to Move Your Plants Outside

If you started your seeds in a small container they will have to be moved into something larger or into the ground usually about a month after they have sprouted.

When you think your plants are ready to move outdoors, start by taking them outside for a few hours at a time. Put them in a spot where they are protected from the wind and get a bit of shade. This is called hardening off your plants. Do this for at least five days and keep them outside a little longer each day.

### Ready to plant?

1. Decide where the plants will go and dig a hole about twice as big as the container your plant is in. Then add some compost and water to the bottom of the hole.
2. Carefully take your plant out of its container. Hint: water the plant first and turn the pot up-side down with your fingers on either side of the plant stem to catch the plant.
3. Put the roots into the hole and cover them with soil up to the lowest leaves on the plant. Don't scrunch the roots!
4. Water the soil so it will settle around the roots.
5. Put about two inches of mulch around the new plant to keep weeds away and the soil moist.
6. Keep checking your plant every few days to make sure it has enough water.

