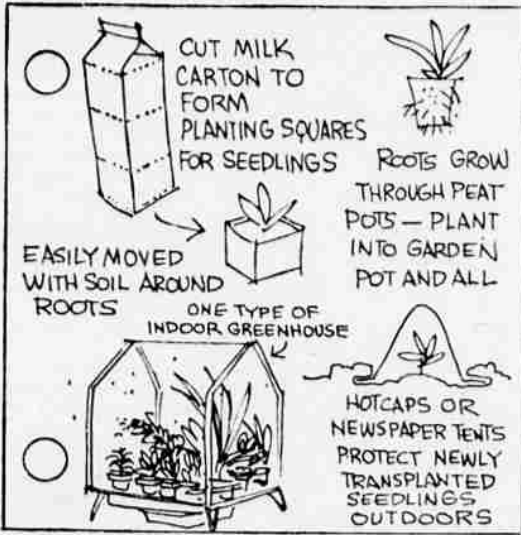


Start Seeds Indoors For Early Bloom In Summer



By ALLAN SWENSON
Written for
Newspaper Enterprise Assn.

Early-season blossoms can beautify your grounds if you start seeds indoors. Whether you want a splash of color in a corner or season-long variety in flower beds, annuals give the best blooming bargains.

This year, there are 30 new annual flowers and 11 vegetable introductions you may want to try. Both annual flowers and early vegetables should be started indoors now.

Miniature greenhouses provide a perfect way to start seeds at any time. The Crystal-Lite greenhouse even has its own reservoir with wicks to keep the soil moist constantly.

When true leaves form on seedlings, it's transplanting time. Have a richer soil mixture ready with added humus or peat moss. Milk cartons can be cut in sections to hold individual seedlings. This way you avoid disturbing other roots when transplanting.

After a week or two, you'll want to begin hardening-off your plants. This means exposing them to more ventilation and lowering temperatures so they will receive less shock when moved outdoors.

Alfalfa Seed From Oregon Given Boost

A new use for an old machine may bring higher returns to Oregon alfalfa seed growers in years ahead, predicts Harold Fennell, Oregon State College extension certification specialist.

Although Oregon already is recognized as an outstanding seed producing area, researchers at OSC are continuing to seek new methods of improving the state's seed crops.

Edward Hardin, seed technologist at the OSC seed laboratory, has developed a way to use a dodder mill (seed separator) to check one pound samples of alfalfa seed for cleanliness.

In the past, a carload of alfalfa seed could be certified on the basis of a 50 gram sample. OSC extension certification specialists questioned the accuracy of this small sample even though it met requirements set by the Association of Official Seed Analysts.

The one pound sample that can be tested in the dodder mill is about nine times larger than the 50 gram sample.

All alfalfa seed certified this year by the OSC seed laboratory is being checked with the dodder mill test. This means buyers of Oregon alfalfa seed can be sure they're getting the best seed available, Fennell emphasized.

The dodder mill Hardin uses for testing is a small laboratory model built by USDA agricultural engineers and the OSC agricultural experiment station seed processing staff under direction of Jesse E. Hammond.

The best time to sow most annuals is about four weeks before they're due to be planted outdoors. However, some seeds take long to germinate and other annuals grow slowly after sprouting. Check these facts on seed packets and plant indoors accordingly.

A good starting soil includes one or two parts loam, one part leaf mold or peat moss and one part sand. Before planting, dust the seeds with a fungicide to prevent damping-off and other disease problems.

If you've taken planting soil from garden areas where diseases were present last year, sterilize the soil. A commercial fumigant can be used. You can also sterilize the soil by heating in the oven at 350 degrees F. for about an hour.

Clay pots, wooden nursery flats or newer plastic starter kits are good for indoors seeding. Peat pots are now time savers. These containers are made of horticultural peat moss and wood. Some have fertilizer built right in. Pots can be placed directly into the garden and roots will grow through them. This eliminates transplanting setback.

Fine seeds usually are sown broadcast. Press them into contact with the soil and sprinkle with water. Larger seeds can be placed in rows. A green thumb rule says to sow seeds at a depth three times the seed's diameter. Watering daily is vital to assure good germination.

A clear plastic cover over the pots or flat will hasten germination. Keep a temperature between 60 and 70 degrees F. to encourage fast sprouting.

To make seed starting easier, many new pots and planting devices have been put on the market. Many are excellent. Some, like ferti-cubes, have nutrients included but no seeds. Others, like punch-n-grow, come preplanted. More elaborate kits include trays, fiber pots and even electric heating cables to boost growth. All types are aimed at making gardening easier and success more certain.

Preplanted flowering mats may do well, depending from whom you buy them. However, you have little choice of arrangement or varieties. Some mats in the past have given poor germination, although improper planting will reduce their germination.

When the earth is warmed and the soil crumbly, you can begin work outdoors. Before plowing or tilling, spread fertilizer and lime. After turning the soil, rake the ground smooth, and mark off rows for groupings for your plants.

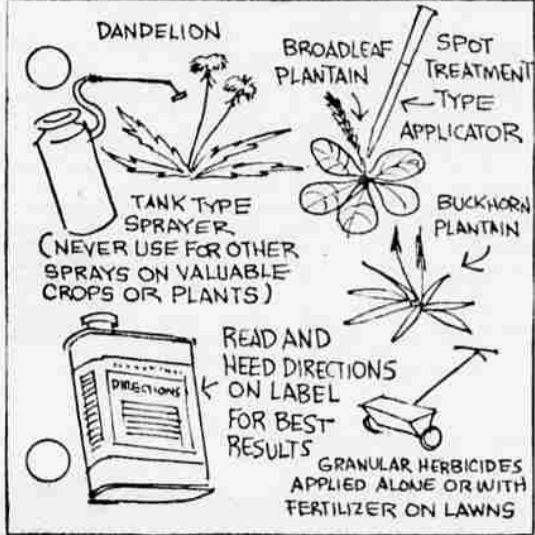
With spring around the garden wall, get an early start by planting seeds indoors now.

JANE'S HAD IT

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) — With Walt Disney's motion picture "Pollyanna," Jane Wyman has returned to feature pictures after a television series. She was hostess and helped produce the TV series, "The Jane Wyman Show." "I've had it," she says, "with that terrible grind which comes from making TV series."

LEAVE IT TO DEAN

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) — Dean J. Martin says he has signed to star in "Cry For Happy," which will be produced in Cinemascope and color on location in Japan early next summer. The film deals with a group of Navy men who take over a geisha house in Tokyo during 1950-51 and form romantic alliances with its girls.



Use Science To Conquer Pesky Weeds In Gardens

By ALLAN SWENSON
Written for NEA

Launch your offensive in the war on weeds early this year. An early start will catch weeds by surprise when they are young and more easily killed.

Weeds have many defenses to defy your attempts to destroy them. They're hardy and grow naturally where you don't want them. They thrive in lawns, flower beds and other places where it is difficult to get at them easily. Finally, many weeds sprout annually from dormant seeds, or grow from perennial roots.

Annual weeds live one year and die. Biennials live for two years. Control should be applied before these weeds produce seeds. Perennials live several years and spread by seeds, roots and bulbs. These long-lived weeds are the hardest to eliminate.

First line of defense against weeds is a well-fertilized soil in which desirable plants are thriving. A heavy turf, for example, will prevent most weeds from pushing through. Mulch on beds and borders holds weeds down. Compost, peat moss, sawdust or hay are good. Ground corn cobs are excellent too.

Tilling in your vegetable garden removes weeds as you break up soil to allow better water penetration.

But modern chemicals are the easiest, most convenient and efficient way to banish weeds.

Weeds have one nasty habit in common with insects. If you miss one, it will reproduce dozens or perhaps hundreds more in a short period of time. Whenever you spray weeds, aim to get them all.

The earliest attack on weeds can be launched before they sprout in the spring. Pre-emergence weed killers are quite effective. There are several types on the market. Some are selective and kill only certain weeds, while

others eliminate all germinating seeds.

For sterilizing soil temporarily, use vapam, calcium cyanamid or sesone. These knock out germinating seedlings effectively. To obtain complete weed eradication in areas such as driveways, patios and along shrub plantings or hedges, a promising new material is available. Called X-all, the combination of amitrol and simazine has proved outstanding in many tests. It's new on the market and controls weeds a full season with one application.

For crabgrass, several materials work fairly well. These include disodium-methyl arsonate (DMA), ammonium methyl arsonate (AMA), and potassium cyanate (PC). Pax also has an arsenal base. New No-Crab with calcium arsonate plus 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-TP is designed as an all-in-one herbicide for broad-leaved weeds and crabgrass, too.

Broad-leaved weeds alone are easier to eradicate with 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T materials. These chemicals are absorbed through the leaves and carried down to the roots of such pests as dandelion, plantain and larger weeds like poison ivy.

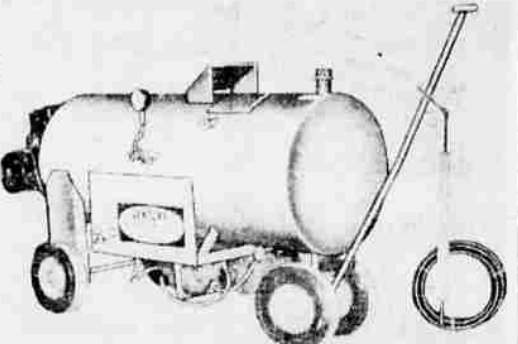
Careful application of any chemical is important. You'll see damage fast if you let 2,4-D type sprays drift to valuable broad-leaved plants. Mix herbicides exactly as directions indicate. Use a coarse spray on quiet warm days and hold nozzles low to soak weeds well.

Granular materials act more slowly, but avoid the spray drift problem. Isolated weeds can be treated with special one-shot devices or removed by hand.

Grass is a weed in the dandelion bed and dandelions are weeds in your lawn. With modern chemical herbicides you can solve weed problems with a squirt of the proper selective spray.



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