

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

What went wrong: Germination

Although many times it may seem simple to purchase a packet of seeds, follow the instructions by planting the seeds in the ground or starting them early indoors and stepping back to watch them grow, but there are issues that can arise in the germination stage of growing your own vegetables that may lead to little or no germination from your seed packet.

Germination is the process of when a plant grows from a seed. Many things occur either at the time of planting, before or immediately after which can cause problems with germination.

The timing of planting the seeds:

Don't jump the gun on planting your seeds and put them in the ground too early, but don't wait too long either. Seeds require the right ground temperature to grow, and if planted too early, an unexpected frost can cause damage, as well. There are countless planting guides out there informing you which USDA Hardiness Zone requires which planting time, so be sure to do your research, read your seed packet and follow instructions so the seeds grow. Also, don't plant all your different varieties of seeds at the same time, because certain vegetables thrive in different soil environments.

Chemicals:

Another cause to poor germination can be the use of weed killer or fertilizer. If you frequently spray your soil with chemicals, you might see an effect on your next season's planting. Weed killers can have



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an effect for up to two years, so if you see problems with germination on this topic, look into using more natural fertilizer and weed prevention to protect your future seeds.

Old seeds:

Sometimes, the problem occurs before the seed even touches the ground. If the seed is too old, or if it has been stored in the wrong environment, they may not germinate. Smaller seeds are less viable to plant, and be sure you keep them in a cool, dark area while storing seeds.

Planting in the wrong soil:

If the soil is too wet when you plant your seeds, it may lead to oxygen restriction. Oxygen is required for the seed's root growth, and the wetness can also cause the seeds to rot. However, don't plant in completely dry soil, either. A seed needs moist soil to germinate.



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Wildlife:

Although there are countless ways a human can cause harm to the seeds which leads to a low or no germination rate, but sometimes nature prevents the seed's growth, too. Birds love to feast on seeds, and they may devour your seeds before the seeds even have a chance to germinate. Use a row cover over your freshly planted seeds to keep birds away until your seeds germinate and are large enough to fend for themselves.

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