



# Module 2

## Seed Starting



**02**

**Seed Starting**

## Module 2

# In This Lesson, You Will Learn

- Where to find herb seed
- What special treatments perennial herbs need to germinate
- When the best time to plant perennial and annual herbs is

## Module 2

# In This Lesson, You Will Learn

- What the moon has to do with gardening success.
- How to prevent damping off disease using herbs
- The best time to transplant herbs to the garden.

# 02

- Growing herbs from seed is trickier than planting annual vegetables
- Herbs seeds have natural germination inhibitors to make sure that they germinate when the soil temperatures and moisture levels are perfect for survival.
- The gardeners job is to trick the seed into starting germination prematurely to ensure a harvest in the first year.





# 01

## Reputable sources of herb seeds or plants

- Your neighbors
- Seedy Saturday seed exchanges
- Herb seed companies
- Bakercreek seeds
- Local seed growers



# **Warning!**

**Bringing home plants from your neighbors' garden could introduce soil or plant pests to your own garden. Be aware. Examine plants carefully before transplanting them to your own soil.**

# 02

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Perennial herb seeds require some specialized treatment to germinate successfully.

Download the herb list from this lesson to see the individualize treatments necessary for success.





# 3 Specialized Seed Treatments

- **Stratification**
- **Scarification**
- **In situ planting**

# Stratification

- **Chilling the seed in damp peat moss or other non-soil composite.**
- **Some herbs require warm – cold- warm stratification to germinate successfully.**
- **Planting the seed outdoors when the natural seed is mature can provide natural stratification.**



# Scarification

- **Damaging the thick coat of the seed to allow water penetration.**
- **Some seeds have a germination inhibitor on the seed. Soaking can remove the germination inhibitor.**
- **Scarification can be done with a nail file or sand paper.**

# **In situ planting**

- **Some herbs do not do well when transplanted.**
- **These seeds should be planted directly in the ground where you want them to grow.**
- **Provide a cloche or other protection to prevent chill if you have a short season.**





# 03

**When should seeds be started?**





**Perennial Herbs should be  
planted 8 weeks  
before your last frost date to  
ensure a harvest in the first  
year, in short season areas**





**Perennial Herbs  
should be planted  
at the same time you would  
plant peppers or tomatoes  
in your area.**



**Annual herbs can be planted 2 weeks before your expected last frost date.**







**04**

## **Planting by Natural Moon Cycles**



*“The old-time gardeners say, “With the waxing of the moon, the earth exhales. ” When the sap in the plants rise, the force first goes into the growth above ground. Thus, you should do all activities with plants that bear fruit above ground during a waxing moon.*

*With the waning of the moon, the earth inhales. Then, the sap primarily goes down toward the roots. Thus, the waning moon is a good time for pruning, multiplying, fertilizing, watering, harvesting, and controlling parasites and weeds”*

**UTE YORK, “Living by the Moon”**



**Planting by the moon cycles  
taps into the natural moisture  
cycles of the earth.**

**Seeds require moisture to  
germinate and transplant  
well.**



During the New Moon the rains usually come. Plant **annual flowers** and **vegetables that bear crops above ground** during the light, or waxing, of the Moon. Plant herbs where we use the leaves like chive, mint, and lemon balm.

**Waxing Moon** from the day after the New Moon till the Full Moon.







Plant **flowering bulbs, biennial and perennial flowers, and vegetables that bear crops below ground** during the dark, or waning, of the Moon.

Flowering and fruiting perennial herbs are planting during the waning moon. Also herbs that we use the root are planted now.

In other words, plant from the day after the Moon is full until the day before it is new again.

**The waning moon is the from the Full Moon to when it becomes New Again. The moon appears in the daytime sky and becomes a shrinking crescent.**





# 05

## **How to Prevent Plant Diseases in Herb Seedlings**



# How to Prevent Damping Off and other Diseases When Starting Plants in Pots



- Begin with sterilized soil (heat in oven or on top of wood stove to sanitize)
- Water from below the pots not overhead. Allow the soil surface to dry between watering
- Allow for good air circulation around pots



# How to Prevent Damping Off and other Diseases When Starting Plants in Pots



- Place rocks in the bottom of pots to keep the roots from sitting in water.
- Inspect transplants carefully for spider mites, white flies, and other pests. Use pest control measures appropriate to the pest. (pests can transmit diseases to plants.)





# 06

**Transplanting seedlings outdoors**



## **Harden Off Plants before Transplanting Outdoors**

- Put outdoors with protection from sun, wind, and cold. Bring in at night or cover.
- Harden off gradually over a week, beginning in the shade and moving closer to the place the plant will hold in the garden over time.





**Seedlings should have protection  
from frost until your frost free  
period is reached.**



# Transplant herbs into larger pots in the same way











The single greatest lesson the garden teaches is that our relationship to the planet need not be zero-sum, and that as long as the sun still shines and people still can plan and plant, think and do, we can, if we bother to try, find ways to provide for ourselves without diminishing the world.

**MICHAEL POLLAN**



## Module 2

# In This Lesson, You Learned:

- ✓ Where to find herb seed
- ✓ The special treatments herb seeds need to germinate well.
- ✓ When to plant herbs so that they grow optimally



## Module 2

# In This Lesson, You Learned:

- ✓ How to plant by the moon cycles
- ✓ How to prevent seedling plant diseases
- ✓ How to harden off plants before transplanting.



# Take Action Now

- Plan your herb garden by noting the time to plant each seed.
- Take into account your last frost date.
- Take into account the moon cycles for optimal results.



## LESSON PREVIEW

# In The Next Lesson, You'll Learn:

- Companion planting with herbs
- How to encourage pollinators with strategic herb plantings
- How to discourage pests naturally through herb plantings.