



## Grow With It support pack

Grow With It is designed to help communities and schools learn more about how we can make better growing choices for our changing climate. By letting us know how you grow, we can gain a better understanding of how people are growing all over the country, helping us to provide tailored support and advice to help everyone improve their growing practices for the future.

If you've signed up to Grow With It, you'll be invited to contribute data throughout the year on how you are growing to our interactive map, all the way from the Big Seed Sow to the Big Seed Save!



This support pack includes handy printable guides that will:

- help you identify what growth stage your plants are at
- provide tips on looking after your seedlings to give them the best start
- help you identify some common plant problems, like pests or diseases
- explain different methods for saving water and watering in your garden



[rhs.org.uk/growwithit](https://rhs.org.uk/growwithit)

# What growth stage are my plants at?

How well do you know your plants' life cycle? Do you know your cotyledons from your true leaves? How do you know when your plants have gone to seed? Use this simple guide to help, and remember to contribute your data to the Grow With It map when your plants reach each growth stage.

**Scan the QR code on this page to submit.**



## Germination

This is the first sign of your seedling starting to grow. Once given the correct conditions to grow, your seed will form a shoot and root, sprouting into a small seedling.



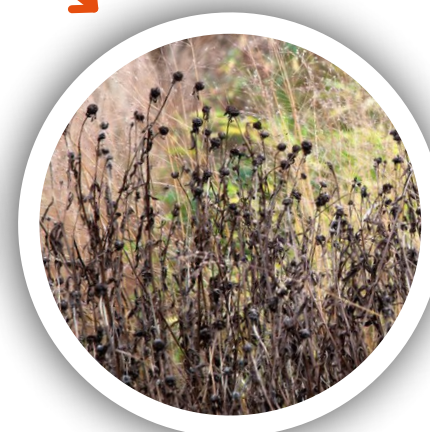
## True leaves

True leaves are the leaves formed *after* germination on your seedling - they will look similar to the mature leaves of your plant. These will appear after the first set of tiny leaves you see at germination, which are called cotyledons.



## Flowering

Once your plants have matured, given the correct conditions they will form buds and then flowers, which enable the plant to reproduce.



## Seed formation

After pollination, your plants will develop seeds which will ripen before being dispersed. Seedheads have ripened when they change colour, usually from green to brown or black.

**Keep an eye out for our seed collecting resources ahead of the Big Seed Save!**

# Seedling aftercare



**Pricking out seedlings**

If you have sown your seeds in containers or trays rather than directly into the ground, prick them out into larger pots or the ground once they have their **true leaves**.

- 1 Carefully use a dibber or a pencil to lift the seedling out of the container, always holding gently by its leaves and not the stem.
- 2 Make a fresh hole in your new container or site, and lower your seedling in so that the leaves sit level with the compost, before watering in.

Congratulations! You've sown your seeds and they have germinated, sprouting small seedlings. To make sure your seedlings get the best start, below are a few next steps to follow:

- ✓ If you've sown your seeds under cover, such as in a propagator or under glass or plastic, be sure to **remove the cover as soon as you see shoots appear**
- ✓ Keep your seedlings in a **bright spot and water lightly** every few days - the compost shouldn't dry out completely, but shouldn't be saturated with water
- ✓ Any tender seedlings sown indoors will need to be **'hardened off'** to acclimatise them to outdoor conditions. You can find more information on hardening off, including what to do if you don't have a greenhouse or cold frame, on the RHS website by searching for 'hardening off'



## Thinning out seedlings

If you have sown seeds directly into the ground, or into a tray or pots, it's important to 'thin out' your seedlings so that they don't compete with each other for space and resources.

Once they have their first set of **true leaves**, remove and discard the weakest seedlings, leaving the stronger plants to grow on.

The back of your seed packet will provide suggested distances for thinning out.

Find more seedling and plant care advice on [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)

# Plant troubleshooting

Even when following best practice and advice, sometimes problems strike and our plants might need some extra care. Below are a few common plant problems you could encounter and some possible causes. Click on each image to find out more on our RHS advice pages.



## **Powdery mildew**

Fungal disease causing a white, powdery coating on leaves, stems and flowers.

## **Yellow leaves**

May be caused by nutrient deficiencies, viruses, drought, waterlogging, or cold, or other diseases or pests.



## **Spots on leaves**

Discoloured spots on leaves can be caused by a virus, fungi or bacteria, or damage from insects.



## **Brown leaves**

May be caused by weather damage, underwatering or overwatering.



## **Wilting**

Temporary wilting will often be caused by drought, waterlogging, or shock after transplanting.



## **Pests**

You may see signs of insects or other animals feeding on your plants such as aphids, whitefly, slugs and snails.

## **Damping off**

Damping off is a fungal disease which can cause seedlings to decay. Seedlings may fail to emerge, or collapse, often covered in white fungal growth.

### **What can cause damping off?**

High humidity, poor air circulation or seeds being sown too crowded can cause seedlings to 'damp off'. This is mainly a problem when sowing seeds indoors or under glass, but can happen outdoors too.

### **The following measures can help you prevent damping off:**

- If re-using pots and trays, ensure these are washed thoroughly before sowing
- Sow seeds thinly to avoid crowding
- Be careful not to overwater
- Keep your seedlings well ventilated
- If you have them, make sure greenhouses and water butts are cleaned regularly

Damping off of seedlings



# Saving water in the garden

Not sure where to start to reduce water usage in your garden? Here are some small changes to help you make every drop count! Which will you try out this year?



**Switch from mains to rains**  
Save water and costs by collecting rainwater using a water butt



**Apply mulch around plants**  
to suppress weeds and reduce water evaporation from the soil



**Right plant, right place**  
Make sure your plants will thrive in their environmental conditions



**Self-watering containers**  
Watch [this video](#) to find out how to make your own self-watering container from recycled materials



**Place trays under pots**  
to collect excess water



**Leave the lawn**  
As tempting as it is to keep our lawns green during summer, they will quickly recover once rain returns



**Ditch the hosepipe**  
Avoid overwatering by switching the hose for a watering can where possible



**Water in the early morning** to give plants more chance to absorb water before the ground dries out during the day

Let us know how you're saving water using [#RHSGrowWithIt](#)