

SEED STARTING

The Basics

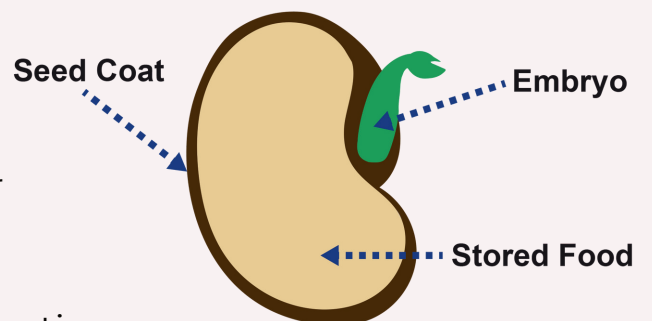
PARTS OF A SEED

Dicot seeds have a seed coat that protects the embryo and the cotyledon or food source for the embryo.

Before a seed begins the germination process it is protected by the seed coat.

The genetics of the plant that produced the seed will determine what conditions are required for germination to occur.

Parts of a Seed



GERMINATION

Water

Temperature - does the seed require cold vernalization or warm soil?

Is light required - often very tiny seeds with little reserves will require light to sense that photosynthesis is possible.

SOIL BLOCK OR TRAY?

A tray is the easiest and most reliable way to start seeds. Soil blocks allow more seedlings to grow in a smaller space and are great for commercial growers but not practical for home gardeners. Either way the key is maintaining moisture/humidity and temperature.



LIGHT & HEAT

The majority of seed germination issues for home growers is cold wet soil. Bottom water and use a heat mat. Cover your seed tray with a plastic dome to increase humidity. This prevents the tiny seedling embryo from drying out as it matures. Once the seedlings have 2 true leaves, remove the humidity dome. Turn off the heat mat once 75% of the seeds have germinated.

