



SOUTH COAST ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY

Riverton Organic Growers Fact Sheet | www.sces.org.nz

\$0.50

SOWING SEEDS

Growing your own plants from seed can be easy and very satisfying. Some plants are extremely easy to grow, while others can be very tricky. Here's some suggestions on getting started.

Seed sowing

Fill a container (an icecream container with holes poked in the bottom is good) with *at least* 5cm deep of seed-raising mix (10cm is better) (picture 1). If you are planting a big seed (like a pea or bean), poke a hole twice the size of the seed, place the seed in and cover it with seed mix. They will need a bit of space (picture 2). If you are planting small seeds like lettuces or tomatoes, make a shallow trench (or 'furrow', about 0.5cm deep), sow the seeds and carefully sprinkle a small amount of seed mix on top. These seeds can be sown closer together (picture 3). Pat the surface flat and gently water. Remember to label your seed trays (picture 4)! A cut up aluminium can can be written on hard with a ballpoint pen and will never fade.



Picture 1: Ready to sow.



Picture 2: Large seeds: peas.



Picture 3: Small seeds: Peppers.

Once seedlings have two sets of leaves (picture 5) they can be 'pricked out' into a deeper container of potting mix or compost, to grow until they are ready to plant in the garden. If your seed trays are deep enough, you may be able to leave the seedlings undisturbed until they are big enough to transplant.



Picture 4: Seeds sown, labelled and ready to be watered.



Picture 5: The seedlings on the left are ready to prick out.

When you prick the seedlings out, it is important to handle them very gently - they are delicate! Hold the leaves of the seedling, carefully loosen the soil with a stick or a small trowel and lift the seedling out, making sure you disturb the soil around the roots as little as possible. Make a hole in the new seedling tray big enough to fit the seedling in, making sure it has room to grow. Once it is in, firm the soil around the plant and then water well.

When sowing small seeds directly in the garden (e.g. carrots and radishes), follow the instructions in picture 3. When sowing larger seeds directly (e.g. broad beans or peas), follow picture 2.