Starting seeds indoors doesn’t get any simpler than when you choose to use peat pellets. Peat pellets are compressed discs of dry peat wrapped in a thin mesh netting. They are inexpensive and readily available, and they are a super speedy, doable, and convenient way to start seeds indoors. Just add water, fluff up the pellets, and plant your seeds. Kids love watching the pellets expand like magic when you add water.

**Advantages**

Peat pellets are convenient, with lots of fun sprinkled in. They take up very little space, and the setup and clean-up is minimal. Starting seeds in peat pellets doesn’t involve purchasing (or making your own) seed-starting mix or getting your house messed up with bags of potting soil.

**Disadvantages**

Peat pellets, although relatively inexpensive, cost more than starting seeds in small containers with soil.

**Supplies Needed**

- Seeds for your favorite vegetables
- Peat pellets. These come in various sizes, separately or in kits that include a cover and tray to hold the pellets. They are available at most garden centers and online. I prefer to use loose pellets over kits due to the cost savings, and I prefer the larger 3-inch (7.5 cm) pellets over the smaller sizes. Seedlings can stay in the 3-inch pellets for the duration of their indoor growing time without the need to transplant them before putting them out in the garden.
- 2- to 3-inch (5 to 7.5 cm)-deep tray. Recycled meat trays, foil pans, or glass casserole dishes work well.
- Pencil
- Water
How to Start Seeds in Peat Pellets

STEP 1
Put the desired number of peat pellets in the tray. One vegetable variety will grow in each pellet. Some seeds may not sprout, so plant extra pellets for each vegetable so you have backup seedlings.

Cover the pellets with warm water. Watch them soak up the water and expand. This is the fun part—kids love it. Add more water if necessary.

STEP 2
Once the pellets are dark brown (5 to 10 minutes), they’ve soaked up enough water. Pour off the excess. Open the top of the netting with a pencil and then loosen the top of the soil with the pencil.

STEP 3
Drop two to three seeds in each pellet in case one doesn’t sprout. Don’t stress if you drop in a few extra seeds; the seedlings can be thinned as they grow. Use the pencil to cover the seeds lightly with soil from the pellet. Label and date your seeds with a plant tag so you don’t forget what you planted.

STEP 4
Mist the top of the pellets lightly with water from a spray bottle. Put your pellet tray in a sunny windowsill or under a grow light. Seeds will germinate in 2 to 14 days, depending on the variety.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS CAN BE FOUND IN:

Organic Gardening for Everyone
Homegrown Vegetables Made Easy
No Experience Required!
By CaliKim
ISBN: 9780760365342
Paperback, 160 pages
$22.99 US/$29.99 CAN
Now Available!
HOW TO BUILD AN EASY, INEXPENSIVE RAISED BED AND PREP IT FOR PLANTING

This project works best if you enlist the help of a family member or friend. One of the rewards of gardening is sharing the fun!

Supplies Needed

(To build a 4 × 4-foot [1.2 × 1.2 m] raised bed; adjust to fit your space.)

- Four 4 foot × 2 inch × 12 inch (1.2 m × 5 cm × 30 cm) planks of wood. These will be the sides of the raised bed. Many hardware stores will cut the wood for you. Untreated pine or Douglas fir is inexpensive; cedar and redwood are more rot resistant but also more expensive.

- Four 12-inch (30 cm) pieces of a 2 × 4 (5 × 10 cm) plank: These will be the corner braces to stabilize the sides of raised bed.

- 25–30 (3-inch or 7.5 cm) deck screws

- Cardboard

- Garden soil. You will need about 16 cubic feet to fill a 4 × 4 foot (1.2 × 1.2 m) raised bed.

TOOLS

- Drill with Phillips head drill bit

- Saw, if you are cutting the wood

- Rake

STEP 1

Attach the 12-inch (30 cm) corner braces and two 4-foot (1.2 m) planks: Place a 12-inch (30 cm) corner brace on top of one of the 4-foot (1.2 m) planks, flush with the end. Place a screw ½ inch (1 cm) from the top edge of the corner brace. Drill the screw into the wood to attach it to the 4-foot (1.2 m) plank. Place the second screw ½ inch (1 cm) from the bottom edge of the corner brace. Drill the screw into the wood to attach it to the 4-foot (1.2 m) plank. Repeat this process for the other end of the same 4-foot plank and again with a second 4-foot (1.2 m) plank.
STEP 2
Attach the sides: With a friend’s help, take one end of one 4-foot plank with the corner brace attached. Line it up at a 90-degree angle with the end of a second 4-foot (1.2 m) plank without the corner brace attached. The plank without the corner brace should be on the outside. Attach the two pieces with two screws. Repeat this process with the other two 4-foot (1.2 m) planks, and then again to connect all four sides of the garden bed.

STEP 3
Place your new raised bed in your garden space. Line the inside with flattened cardboard boxes, completely covering the ground underneath. This limits weeds from growing through into your raised bed. If your raised bed will be placed on concrete, you can skip this step.

STEP 4
Fill your new raised bed to the top with soil. Use a rake to level out the soil.

Wasn’t that super quick, simple, and inexpensive to build? Now you are ready to plant your veggies in your new raised bed.

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