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Seed Germination and starting your plants

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Seed Germination and starting your plants:

The first step in germination is obtaining great seeds from Nirvana. Great genetics along with good care, selection and proper seed storage all help you get off to a good start.

There are several ways to prepare your seeds for germination. We'll discuss a couple approaches. In simplest terms all you need is moisture and warm temperatures. Presoaking seeds in a clean container with distilled water for 15 to 20 hours at a temperature of 24C/75F to 29C/85F will help speed germination. To accomplish this you might use a paper cup with small holes in the bottom to allow water in. Place the seeds into the cup. Place the paper cup into the clean container which has enough water in it to completely saturate the seeds when the cup is immersed into the container. Loosely cover the container and store in a warm dark place.

After presoaking:

At this point there are a number of options. You can choose to plant the seeds in a growing medium, (recommended), or continue to watch them carefully until the seed husk begins to crack open/sprout. Plant the seed(s) in growing medium immediately upon first sign of husk cracking. Another safer avenue is to place the seeds between two layers of moistened cotton cloth on a plate. Enclose the plate in a moisture proof wrap such as cellophane. NEVER let your seeds dry out! Check the seed(s) at least every 8-12 hours to determine if the seed has cracked/sprouted. If it has sprouted transfer the seed(s) to the growing medium immediately, being very careful not to damage or injure the seed body or root. Use a tweezers for gentle handling. Plant the seed into the growing medium root pointing down so that the body of the seed is buried approximately 1cm, 3/8 inch deep.

Another avenue, (the safest/preferred method), is to take the seed from the presoaking step and planting the seed 1cm, 3/8 inch into the growing medium. There are many appropriate growing mediums but we suggest avoiding using a Jiffy peat cube alone. Vermiculite is a good growing medium as is Jiffy-mix, Ortho-mix, Super soil etc. or a mixture of sterile potting soil blended with vermiculite at a ratio of around 70/30. Look for a neutral pH growing medium of 7 pH. Germinating/sprouting seeds need oxygen and moisture, avoid heavy growing medium. If hydroponics systems are being employed the growing medium may be rock wool, vermiculite etc. Germination/sprouting can occur quickly in a day or two but may take up to two weeks or more in cooler conditions or with older seeds. Germination usually occurs in a few days under good conditions.

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Seedlings also need room for their tap root to grow.

Better results and more females are obtained when; the seed/seedling has warm conditions and plenty of space to send down tap roots around 10-15cm/4-6 inches or more, early in its growth. Choose a container large enough and deep enough for the seedling to establish a good root structure. It's better to have too large of a container than too small. Keep the seed and top soil moist by spraying the top soil regularly with water but don't over water or allow water to stand in the bottom of the container. Ensure the container has drain holes at the bottom to allow water to exit the container freely. You can cover the container lightly with perforated cellophane, (mini greenhouse), during germination and initial sprouting, but as soon as the sprout has emerged remove the cover and place the container/plant under light. During the germination/sprouting period try to keep the temperature between 24-29C / 75-85F. It's preferable to germinate and grow your plants for a significant period of time in the same container for best results.

When the sprout emerges from the soil and the first full leaves emerge the plant will need 13 to 18 hrs or more light per day to begin its vegetative growth stage. At this stage of growth do not place the plant under excessively strong light, such as a high intensity lamp or in intense sunlight where it might dry out or wilt under excessive heat and stress. During germination and sprouting fertilizer is not necessary and may be damaging. After the plant is established fertilizer may be applied beginning with a weak solution of about 1/3 normal strength.

Minimize transplanting, once is enough. If you choose transplanting it is preferable to wait until the plant is well established. If you choose to transplant please take care not to damage the stem or roots of the plant. Handle the plant gently preferably by the leaves or leafy areas of the plant. Also be careful not to damage the root structure or allow the roots to begin to dry.

For more information about growing please download our "Cannabis Growing Guide".