

# HOW TO PLANT AND REPLANT AN EARTHBOX WITH SEEDS OR SEEDLINGS

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## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Remove all parts of the EarthBox kit from the box and spread them out. You should have the following parts: one EarthBox, one aeration screen, one bag of potting mix, one bag of fertilizer, one bag of dolomite, and one bag containing two fitted covers, one watering tube, and one instructional booklet.

**STEP 2:** Position the EarthBox wherever you want the plants to grow, as it is much heavier when planted and full of water. Follow the instructions in the EarthBox Instructional Booklet to prepare the EarthBox and fill it with potting mix.

**STEP 3:** Place the fertilizer strip in a mound in the appropriate location for what you are planting (refer to the planting guide at the bottom of the instructional booklet). Stretch the fitted cover over the watering tube and across the top of the EarthBox.

**STEP 4:** Whether you grow crops from seed or seedlings use the EarthBox Instructional Booklet plant chart and guide to determine the number of seeds and seedlings to plant and where to plant them. However, when planting seeds, plant two in the potting mix at each hole in the fitted cover to ensure successful germination of at least one seed.

**STEP 5:** Cut the required number and appropriate size of holes in the fitted cover of the EarthBox. Do not cut large holes in the mulch to allow light to reach seeds. They will grow towards the light and through the holes. Plant the seeds at the recommended depth on the seed package. Make sure the seeds are lightly covered with potting mix after planting them unless the seed pack instructions indicate that the seeds need to be planted on the surface. To expedite germination, sprinkle the potting mix with water to moisten the potting mix and seeds.

**If planting starter plants,** remove the plants from their tray and gently remove the excess potting mix from the roots to free them from root bind and to fit them through the mulch cover hole. Sometimes, you can manipulate the seedling root ball to fit directly into the hole. When possible, do this. However, even in this case you want to loosen the roots to free them to grow out into the light and airy potting mix. The looser they are, the quicker they will take hold and the sooner they will establish and grow strong. Use your fingers to make a hole in the potting mix that is the same size as the root mass of your starter plants, and then gently, but firmly, place the starter plant in the hole. Pack potting mix around the starter plant, and then carefully water the starter plant to settle the roots.

**STEP 5:** Once the planting has been completed, keep the water reservoir filled. If crops are grown indoors, watering needs to be done approximately every three days. If crops are grown outdoors, watering will need to be done every other day and sometimes every day, depending on weather conditions and plant type and size.

**STEP 6:** Observe the plants daily to watch for pests and disease. The EarthBox reduces the likelihood of both pests and disease but it does not prevent them entirely. In particular, keep your eye out for aphids, little bugs that can be easily treated with organic insecticidal soap. When applied in the early stages the aphid problem is greatly minimized.

**STEP 6:** If crops are grown indoors and you are using a grow light, periodically adjust the grow light so that it is no more than 3-4" above the top of your plants.

**STEP 7:** If you planted your crops from seed, they will need to be thinned to one plant per hole once the plants are 3-4" tall. To do this, pinch off the smaller of the two plants growing through each hole. If only one plant is growing through a hole, leave it alone. If neither seed germinated, remove one of the extra seedlings (before pinching it off) and carefully plant it with its roots in the empty hole.

## **STORING AN EARTHBOX**

**STEP 1:** Pull out the old plants or cut them off at the base.

**STEP 2:** Remove the old fitted cover and discard.

**STEP 3:** Use a cup to carefully scoop out the remnants of the old fertilizer strip and scatter the remnants in a compost pile or in some other location outdoors.

**STEP 4:** Place a new fitted cover on the EarthBox.

**STEP 5:** Drain the water reservoir. The box may sit anywhere during the winter, even outside, if these simple steps are performed.

## **TO RE-PLANT AN EARTHBOX**

**STEP 1:** If you did not pull the old plants out, you will need to remove the plants and use a garden tool to break up any large root masses that remain before proceeding.

**STEP 2:** Top off the EarthBox with fresh potting mix.

**STEP 3:** Add 2 cups of fertilizer strip in the appropriate location. Cover the box with a new fitted cover, plant it as per the above instructions. (Note – if you plant tomatoes, be sure to add new dolomite to the top 3-4" of potting mix. Otherwise add dolomite every other planting).

If a crop experienced disease in a given EarthBox, it is wise to plant a different genus in the EarthBox to avoid seasonal extension of the disease.