## Start your garden now

getting "itchy fingers" to start some gardening? In many areas of the United States, especially the north, you can begin from late February into March This is the prime time to sow seeds indoors for vegetables and flowers that need a headstart to get them up and growing

Seedlings of most varieties take about 6 to 10 weeks to develop into transplants ready for the outdoor garden. Exceptions are begonias and geraniums which should be grown inside longer

You think you don't have a good place to start seeds indoors, or you've had disappointments before?

"This year you can have fun and be successful," says Jeannette Lowe, Forticulturist with the W Atlee Burpee Co. "A greenhouse is an ideal place to start seedlings, but I don't have one Like most gardeners, I start seeds on my sunniest windowsills and under plant lights I do provide the few essentials necessary for good germination (sprouting) of the seeds and growth of the plants, but they don't get any pampering." Here are Miss Lowe's pointers for you to follow for success

Concentrate on varieties that need headstart. These include flowers and vegetables with tiny seeds, or which take a long time to develop into flowering or producing plants Three important flowers are Impatiens, Petunias and Snapdragons, especially the glamarous Liberty Bells Hybrid Snapdragons

If you have plenty of room and ambition, consider Asters, Coleus, Bedding Begonias. Dahlias, Geraniums, Salvia and Vinca rosea (Periwinkle) Hybrid Marigold-Climax, Ladies, Nuggets and the new Fireworksusually produce more plants from each packet of seeds if sown inside The same is true of Hybrid Zinnias, including Zeniths, Bouquets, Peter

DOYLESTOWN - Are you Hybrid Zinnias and Marigolds grow so fast, however, that a 5 to 6 week indoor headstart is plenty long enough for them

In vegetables Tomatoes are a 'must", especially hybrids including Burpee's Big Girle Hybrid VF, Supersteak Hybrid VFN and Burpee's new Early Pick Hybrid VF Other vegetables that need a headstart include Broccoli. Cabbage, Cauliflower, Eggplant, Head Lettuce, Onions and Pep-

Grow your own plants and you'll have the best varieties, and the exact ones you prefer, for your garden That's one of the biggest benefits of starting your own seeds You don't have to depend on what may be available at garden marts later on

If you're lucky enough to have a greenhouse, that's the ideal place to grow seedlings In the average house or apartment, however, you can arrange a suitable place or "nursery". Windowsills that get sunshine and good light most of the day, where temperature runs about 65 to 75°F or a little cooler at night, are fine.

No bright windowsills? You can create "sunshine" at the flick of a switch with plant lights, or fluorescent light tubes hung about 3 to 6 inches above the tops of the plants on a table or bench With these lamps turned on 12 to 16 hours a day (off at night), a dark corner or a moderately warm, airy basement can double as a greenhouse or hotbed An automatic timer to turn the lights on and off saves work in tending the seedlings and also lets you go away for a day or weekend now and then

With the 'nursery" arranged, you're ready to sow seeds, in sterile planting material Do not use garden soil unless you bake it first in a 180°F oven for 30 to 45 minutes to kill fungus organisms that often cause germination (sprouting) failures of seeds or

and death of seedlings Let soil cool before using

The easiest, safest and most successful way to start seeds is to use some of the sterile seedstarting aids on the market Burpee's Early Start Kit supplies all the essentials, peat pots and seed-sowing trays, a plastic tray to hold them, planting formula in which to sow seeds, and label stakes Jiffy-7 Peat Pellets, Fertl-Cubes, and Seed in Start Planting Trays also work well Follow the directions that come with them

Sow larger types of seeds just deep enough to be hidden from view Scatter fine seeds, including begonias and petunias, over the

surface of the planting material and press them in very lightly. Too deep sowing often results in poor germination (sprouting) of tinyseeded varieties

Also some, such as petunias, need the stimulus of light to come up well Label each variety with name and date of sowing. Keep the planting material slightly moist all the time, but not soaked Use a misty spray that does not dislodge seeds or seedlings

As soon as shoots appear, grow the seedlings in your bright, airy but not drafty 'nursery'' Elevate containers on windowsills to the level of the glass panes so the tiny plants won't have to stretch for the light Also turn them around each

day so they will grow straight It's a combination of sufficient light, moderate temperatures, (60 to 70°F), enough but not too much water and ample growing space, that results in sturdy, dark green seedlings.

If you started your seeds in Jiffy-7's', Fertl-Cubes' or other individual containers, thin or snip to the one best seedling in each. Come spring, you can move the plants to the garden with minimal disturbance to the roots If you sowed seeds in flats (shallow boxes with drainage holes in the bottom), trays or pots, transplant the seedlings to roomier quarters when they have at least two pairs

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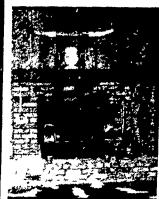
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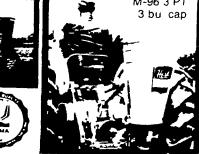
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The GT-77 (shown right) has been promoted from a garden tractor/seeder (shown) to a farm seeder. Many are putting this seeder on ATVs 3-wheel Motor Bikes with flotation tires, and an assortment of vehicles to get the seeding done when ground is wet and soft. Why not have fun while doing your seeding?

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