

# Growing seeds and sprouts

Water is amazing! Without water there would be no life on our earth. All living things require water to grow and survive.

Did you know you can sprout your own seeds using only water and natural light?!

Wow! Eventually they will need some soil to help them grow bigger into seedlings... And then, once the seedlings are strong enough, you can transfer them to a garden bed or pot to grow into a plant!

## You will need:

- Seeds
- Containers, egg cartons, jars or garden bed/pots to grow your seeds in
- Spray bottle or small watering can
- Tap water or recycled water
- Optional – cotton wool, potting mix
- Pencil and paper

## Steps:

1. First you will need to find some regular seeds or kitchen sprouting seeds – see below for some tips on where to find seeds to sprout.
2. Now you get to choose how you want to grow your seeds!
  - Kitchen sprouts can be grown in a clean jar, covered with a piece of clean cloth (to allow some fresh air in) secured with a rubber band.
  - These are designed to be munched on as a snack soon after they sprout, they are tasty and super healthy – use seeds such as alfalfa, radish, broccoli, snow peas. NOTE – do not use regular seeds as kitchen sprouts – make sure you purchase specific ‘sprouting’ seeds.
  - Seeds that you want to grow into seedlings can be sprouted on damp cotton wool or in a small jar, that way you can watch the roots and shoots begin to sprout and grow. This is a great Science experiment to observe over time. When you have watched the root and shoot sprout from the seed you can transfer your seed into soil.



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## Steps (continued):

- Seeds can also be planted directly into soil in small containers – an egg carton is a great seedling container – simply fill each hole with a small amount of potting mix and bury your seeds about 1cm deep.
  - No matter how you plant your seedlings, they will need a small amount of water a few times a day, and they will need some natural light, but not full sun – a bright kitchen bench or windowsill is perfect! Try watering your seedlings each time you have breakfast, lunch and dinner. A small amount of water is enough – you can use a spray bottle, or simply pour a small amount over them from the tap or a small bottle.
3. Now, you get to become both a gardener and a scientist!! Every time you water your seeds, make some observations. What has changed? Do you see a small root sprouting? Or some green shoots? Has the colour of your seed changed at all over time? If you are sprouting the seeds without soil, you could also measure your seeds with a small ruler.

## Take it further:

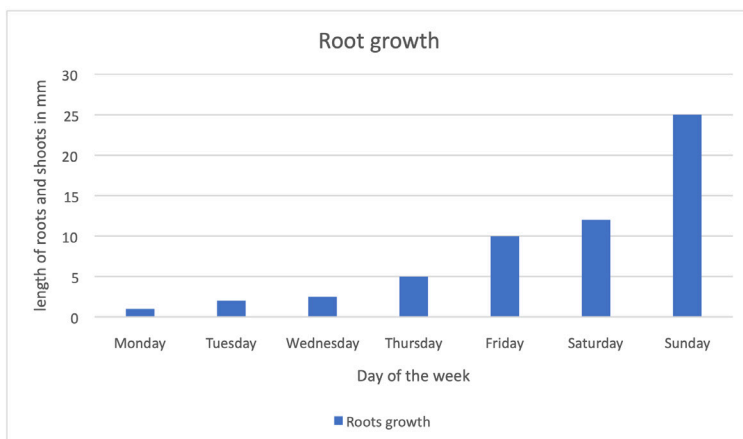
- Make a seed diary and record the changes you observe at least once a day. Draw/sketch what your seed looks like each time and write down some of your observations about the changes you notice.
- Record the measurements of the roots and shoots as your seed grows and put the data in a table (see below).
- Ask an adult to help you make a graph of the data you have collected after your seeds have been growing for a week – what do you notice? Did your seed grow more one day compared to another?

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## My seed data

|        | Monday | Tuesday | Wednes-<br>day | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--------|--------|---------|----------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Roots  |        |         |                |          |        |          |        |
| Shoots |        |         |                |          |        |          |        |

## My seed graph (example)



- Once your seeds have sprouted and they are strong seedlings, transfer the garden or a pot – and if you keep watering them each day, you might even grow a tasty snack for yourself!

## Take it further:

- Contact your local hardware store, garden supply centre or nursery, either online or by giving them a call and see if they can pop some seeds into the post for you.
- Your local supermarket will often have a garden section where you can find a variety of seeds. If you just want to sprout the seeds for an experiment, you can even buy dried beans or chickpeas and have a go at sprouting them! These probably won't be great for your garden, but they're perfect for an experiment. Remember to compost them when you've finished with them.
- Order online – buy Mr Fothergill's kitchen sprouts and seeds online, or visit the Diggers Club online for a great range of seeds, or use a google search to find an online seed supplier close to you.