

# What To Do About Problems With Bedding Plant Seedlings



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Have you had problems with germination or growth of your bedding plant seedlings? If so, hopefully the following tips will help you prevent these problems or overcome them. Listed are the major problems with the probable causes, followed with what can be done about each problem.

1. Poor germination caused by improper temperature. This can be prevented by checking soil temperature. Be sure it agrees with proper germination temperature for variety.
2. Poor germination caused by improper moisture. This can be prevented by correct watering, improved practices.
3. Poor germination caused by lack of light. This can be prevented by checking which species require light to germinate. Sow these types of seed on top of soil.
4. Poor germination caused by damping off. This can be prevented by the use of steamed soil for germination or a synthetic soil that is sterile. Drench with recommended fungicide. Improve air circulation and keep the germination area clean.
5. Poor germination caused by high salts. This can be prevented by not using soils that have been heavily fertilized. Leach.

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- Poor germination caused by methyl bromide damage. This can be prevented if you make sure treated soil is well aerated. Don't use on carnation or salvia plants.
- Rotting seedling at soil line caused by Rhizoctonia. This can be prevented by applying recommended fungicide.
- Poor seedling growth caused by improper watering. This can be prevented by checking to be sure soil is well drained. Water thoroughly so that some leaching occurs. Don't let seedlings stand in water.
- Poor seedling growth caused by lack of fertilizer. This can be prevented by checking to see if seedlings need nutrients; soil test to determine how much and when to apply.
- Wilting of seedlings caused by high salts or improper watering. This can be prevented by checking with solubridge and leaching for high salts or by watering thoroughly each time you water.
- Weak, spindly growth caused by low-light intensities or high temperatures. This can be prevented by not keeping in dark place for long periods of time and using proper growing temperature.
- Curvature of leaves caused by gas damage. This can be prevented by clean-

ing all burners and checking gas lines to be sure there are no leaks.

- Poor root growth caused by lack of phosphorus. This can be prevented by applying superphosphorus to soil mix, or a phosphorus containing fertilizer.

You should always try to avoid all seedling problems, and the best way is to follow these steps:

- Always use a sterilized soil mix (artificial mix) that contains proper nutrient levels. Do not leave in open or let it become contaminated.
- Water properly and thoroughly each time you water.
- Use the proper temperature for germinating seedlings.
- Check whether seed should be germinated under lights or in the dark.
- Always keep the germination and growing area clean and well maintained. Surface sterilize benches and flats before using the area.
- Always keep records of planting dates, times, amounts, and temperature, along with other practices and procedures, and your crops should be much better this year.