



What do I need?

10-15cm plant pots

Potting compost

Water

Eggshell seedlings*

*See the Eggshell Seedling Starters activity



Look out for the seedlings' *cotyledon* (seed leaves), the first visible signs of germination.



eggshell seedling aftercare

What do I do?

Once you've sown your seeds it's important to learn how to care for them so that they germinate and grow. Check your eggshell seedling starters once a day to make sure they have:

- 1. Water.** For a seed to germinate it needs to soak up water to hydrate its food supply so it can grow its first root and shoot to become a seedling. The compost around seeds and seedlings need to be kept constantly moist. Take care that the compost doesn't become saturated (waterlogged) or allowed to dry out as these can cause the seedling to die. A good watering method is to spritz the compost with a clean, recycled spray bottle.
- 2. Air.** Seeds need oxygen in the soil so that they can produce energy for germination and growth. To make sure there's enough oxygen in the compost don't over water as too much water means no space for air. Seedlings need clean air around their leaves and stems too. Make sure you don't overcrowd them as this can cause moulds to develop.

- 3. Light.** Seedlings need around 14-16 hours of daylight each day so they can make the energy they need to grow. Make sure your seedlings get as much daylight as they can each day such as by growing them on a sunny windowsill. Take care that the sun doesn't scorch the leaves on very sunny days though. Most seeds actually need warmth rather than light to germinate but a sunny windowsill will help with that too!

Potting On

Potting on is the act of moving a plant into a bigger pot. A good sign that your seedling is ready to pot on is when it has 3-4 true leaves - the leaves that grow after the initial seed leaves.

To pot on a seedling, fill one of your plant pots to the top with compost and make a hole in the middle large enough to fit your eggshell. Gently break away some of the bottom of your eggshell taking care not to damage the roots. Plant your eggshell in the compost and give it a good drink of water.