



FARM AND HOME NEWS



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Growing Transplants Indoors

The first time I tried growing both flowers and vegetable transplants at home it was not a great success. I did everything right at first. I started with good seed, a well-drained growing medium, and adequate light. I even went to the trouble to build a rack and hung my fluorescent shop light on a chain so I could raise it as the plants grow. I started with new trays that I clean with soap and water and disinfected with one part bleach to ten parts water. I followed the planting instructions on the packets for each type of seed. I was off to a great start following all the recommendations.

But then I had a lot of tall, spindly plants, which is a common problem when growing transplants indoors. This I learned can be caused by poor light, excessive watering, high temperatures, excessive fertilization, and crowded growing conditions. I kept the lights no more than 4 to 6 inches above the seedlings, leave the lights on 12 hours a day like you should. I controlled the temperature and I did not use excessive fertilizer. My problem was with over watering and overcrowded conditions.

When the first pair of "true leaves" appear, you should thin or transplant the seedlings. Allow the potting soil to become somewhat dry between watering. The best quality transplants are short, stocky, and dark green. I watered too much and I just could not bring myself to thin the plants, and overcrowding accrued.

There are obstacles to growing transplants indoors, however you can produce good quality transplants if you follow all the good cultural practices. If you would like to learn more about starting a garden transplants at home stop by our office and for fifty cents you can pick up a copy of PM 874 Staring garden transplants at home.

DHIA Election

The Howard County DHIA held its annual meeting on March 3, 2005 at Prime & Dine in Cresco. At that time they held election of officers. Elected officers are: Roger Kleve, President; Roger Brookins, Vice; Naomi Church, Secretary; Miriam Humpal, board member; Ken Shatek, board member.

New idea for new farmers

One reason that young people state for not going into farming is the cost to get started in traditional row crop farming. As a new farmer many can not afford to buy or rent a large farm but need to generate high revenue to pay the bills. One option to consider is to start small with non-traditional crops or try organic farming. With most new farming operations you would need to supplement your income with off-farm employment for the first several years until you built up your farming operation. However, this is not unusual for any new business. Most new small business take several years before they start making a profit. Before entering any new business or farming venture you will need to do your homework. Do your research, talk to others in the field, do your business plan, and be prepared to work long hours.

Woman Land & Legacy

On March 3 we (FSA, NRCS, & ISU Extension) held our second W L& L program for woman involved in agriculture called Healthy lives, Healthy land. It was a great interactive program enjoyed by around 40 individuals. We learned about nutrition, living healthier lifestyle, the 10 commandments of a healthy farm, and we also learned some great stretching exercises. It is our hope to offer several programs over the next year on different topics of interest to woman in agriculture.