

Seed packets explained

Bewildered by the jargon on the back of seed packets?

Here's a list of what the words and expressions mean.

- Seeds are **sown**, plants are **planted**.
- **Transplants** and **seedlings** are small, young plants.
- **Germinate** = when the seed starts to grow and develop a root and a stem.
- **Under glass** = a cover of some kind, to protect the seeds or plants from inclement weather. Examples - bottle cloches, cold frames and greenhouses.
- **In heat** = a heated area for growing in. It helps seeds germinate. Most often needed for crops, such as tomatoes, that originate in warm countries.
- **Drill** = shallow V-shaped dip, to sow the seed in. Often the depth is given, such as 'a drill 1.5cm deep'. Use the corner of a rake, or the tip of a trowel, to make the drill.
- **Flat-bottomed drill** = shallow trench, but flat or U-shaped, not V-shaped. Often used for sowing peas in.
- **Prick out** = lift young plants out of the pot in which they germinated, and move them to another growing position, usually a new pot or tray with wider spacing, so they can develop. Can sometimes be 'pricked out' from pots straight into the garden.
- **Transplant** = Move young plants from one growing spot to another. Sometimes from a pot to the garden, sometimes from one part of the garden to another. The young plants are often also called 'transplants'.
- **Harden off** = acclimatise young plants, growing in pots in a warm place, to outside conditions. It often means moving the plants outside during the day, and returning them inside at night for a few days/weeks.
- **Thinly** = sowing thinly means not too many seeds all in one spot. When handling small seeds, mix them with a handful or two of dry sand. This automatically makes it easier to sow the seeds more thinly.
- **Thin** = remove plants in order to allow more space for the remaining ones to develop. 'Thin to 5cm apart' gives 5 cm space between each plant. You can often use the plants you've removed somewhere else in the garden, if you dig them out carefully when thinning. In some cases you can eat them.
- **Spacing** = space between plants in a row, and distance between rows.



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