

# The Grapevine

## Getting the Garden Started

This weekend I finally had some time to work in my basement and spend time with the seedlings that I started about three weeks ago. I'm still not quite sure where I'm going to plant them but I have a decent collection of broccoli, celery and various native flowers currently growing happily under fluorescent lights. Now that they are started, let's talk about the next steps till we can move them outside.

Once your seeds have sprouted and started growing, providing enough light is key to keep your seedlings compact and growing strong. If you look closely in the photo at right you can see some of my seedlings have quickly outgrown the ones right next to them and have gotten a bit stretched. This was caused by having my light too far away from the flat. To help fix this issue I move the light about 2-4" from the tray and they should quickly slow their growth. This issue was caused by having the dome on my tray for too long trying to encourage the other plants to sprout. To help keep the plants compact I also changed the timer on my lights so they were on for a minimum of 14 hours instead of the 12 I had with the rest of my tropical plants. If you continue to have issues with seedlings stretching after moving them closer to the light you can also add a fan blowing across the tray. That will slow the growth as the seedling acclimate to the air flow.



It's amazing how quickly those seedlings can grow and change. Once the seedlings in the peat pellets have developed their first true leaves it's time to transplant them to the next stage. The seedlings in the trays will stay longer because of the larger root space. If you have some seeds that are growing faster than others it's better to transplant them to their own pot to prevent them getting burned by the lights. When you transplant seedlings always hold them by leaves or in my case the peat pellets or root ball, never hold them by the stem. A seedling can regrow leaves if they are torn off on accident but it will not regrow if the stem is broken. Most vegetables you will plant at the same depth they were growing before. You can plant tomato seedlings a bit deeper than others because tomatoes will root along the stem where other plants will not.

Once I transplanted my seedlings and watered them in well I then fertilized them to encourage growth and prevent nutrient deficiencies. I used a soluble fertilizer at the recommended rate on the label. I will continue to fertilize these little babies every week or two as needed. Ideally my transplants should be dark green in color with short and sturdy stems. If my seedlings continue to have a yellow tint or develop a purple hue I will need to change my plan and fertilize more frequently. It is very important to follow the recommended rates for seedlings because they can be delicate and easily damaged if you overfertilize them. The rest of the seedlings will have to wait for fertilizer till after they are transplanted. If the seedlings start to grow faster than desired cut back on your fertilization of the plants to half strength fertilizer or fertilize less frequently depending on your plans. The fast growth is not as strong which leads to weaker seedlings when you go to harden them off outdoors. We also don't want the plants to outgrow the space we have to keep them in.



For now these little guys will be hanging out in my basement under grow lights till it warms up. I'm hoping after this week's cold snap to move the broccoli out to my sun room to adjust to sunlight and varying temperatures so I can free up some space inside. Once we get closer to time to move our transplants outside I'll talk more about hardening them off so they are ready to face the wide world of Kansas wind and sun. Check out the [K-STATE Vegetable Planting Guide](#) for more information on when to plant different vegetables outside. Till then happy growing and enjoy your little bit of spring inside!!

## Reminders-

- Once temperatures are consistently over 50 degrees or when plants start growing clean up the perennial bed by cutting back foliage and removing the winter mulch layer. Divide any perennials and plant back in the garden.
- Sharpen and repair your garden tools. Now is the time to have your lawn mower and other equipment serviced before the gardening season begins.
- Spray peach trees for Peach Leaf Curl and plum trees for control of Black Knot.
- Apply Dormant Oil on fruit trees to control scale and mites.
- Check your houseplants for unwanted visitors.

## Upcoming Events

- *March 1<sup>st</sup> at Noon- Houseplants: Basics and Beyond*  
Over 66% of U.S. households have at least one houseplant, but often the terms used to describe their care can be confusing. Join Cassie Thiessen, Post Rock District Horticulture Extension Agent, & Calla Edwards, Butler County Horticulture Extension Agent, as they decode common houseplants terms related to light, water, and other plant needs. Learn about some unique houseplants and the best practices to keep them thriving. For more information on the Garden Hour series [click here](#). Register here: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>
- *March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm- Planning and Problem Solving in the Garden*  
Gardening has become an extremely popular activity in the United States. Many of the biggest issues that gardeners have start with not planning the garden out and getting it started correctly at the beginning of the year. Join us to learn the basics of planning the garden from where to plant to when, why rotating plants is important and to cover some basic problem solving for the most common issues that gardeners face. This event will be at 7 pm at the Augusta United Methodist Church at 2420 Ohio Street, Augusta, KS.
- *March 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm- So you want to grow vegetables in containers?*  
Are you interested in growing your own vegetables but live in an apartment, have a shady backyard or have a physical limitation that prevents you from gardening in the ground? Container vegetable gardening is a great way to still grow your own vegetables on your window sill, patio, porch or even your front step. Join us at the Bradford Memorial Library to learn how to grow your own tomatoes, corn, herbs and any vegetable in a container.
- *April 5<sup>th</sup> at Noon- Growing to New Heights with Vertical Gardening*  
Make the most of your garden by growing up, instead of out. Create vertical gardens to get your garden off of the ground, provide more space for plants, and expand your gardening area. Join Amanda Groleau, Frontier District Horticulture Extension Agent, as she shares the benefits of vertical gardening. Learn which fruits, vegetables, and flowers will grow best in a vertical garden and how to get started. For more information on the Garden Hour series [click here](#). Register here: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>
- *April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9-5 and April 23<sup>rd</sup> from noon to 5- Grow and Bloom in Butler Lawn and Garden show*  
The Butler County Master Gardeners in an effort to promote horticultural activities and to provide educational opportunities are hosting our first Lawn and Garden Show in Butler County. The show will be held at the Butler County Community/4-H Building located at 206 N Griffith St, El Dorado, KS. This event will feature businesses from around the area in our vendor show along with expert speakers both from the area and across the state. Check out our website for more information: <https://www.butler.k-state.edu/horticulture/show/Butlerlawnandgardenshow.html>