

Seed Starting

An overview, resources, and advice

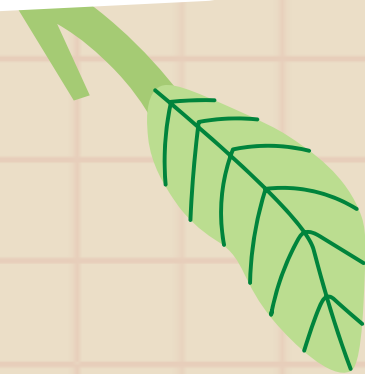
with: Amy!



WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE GROWING PLANTS FROM SEED?



What we'll focus on today



Understanding the steps to take before planting

Understanding how to start and maintain your new seedling babies

Learning about some additional resources to help with your journey!

Who am I? Why am I the one leading this?

- I'm Amy! I use she/her. I live in Cleveland Heights, I'm from Toledo, and I lived in Chicago for about a decade before moving here
- I've been gardening for at least 3 decades and growing food for about 20 years
- Librarians love to shove resources at people



Groundwork

Brainstorming

Research

What do I want to eat?

What does my growing site look like?

What grows here?

What can I manage?

Resources:

Territorial Seed

Jung Seed

Cleveland Seed Bank

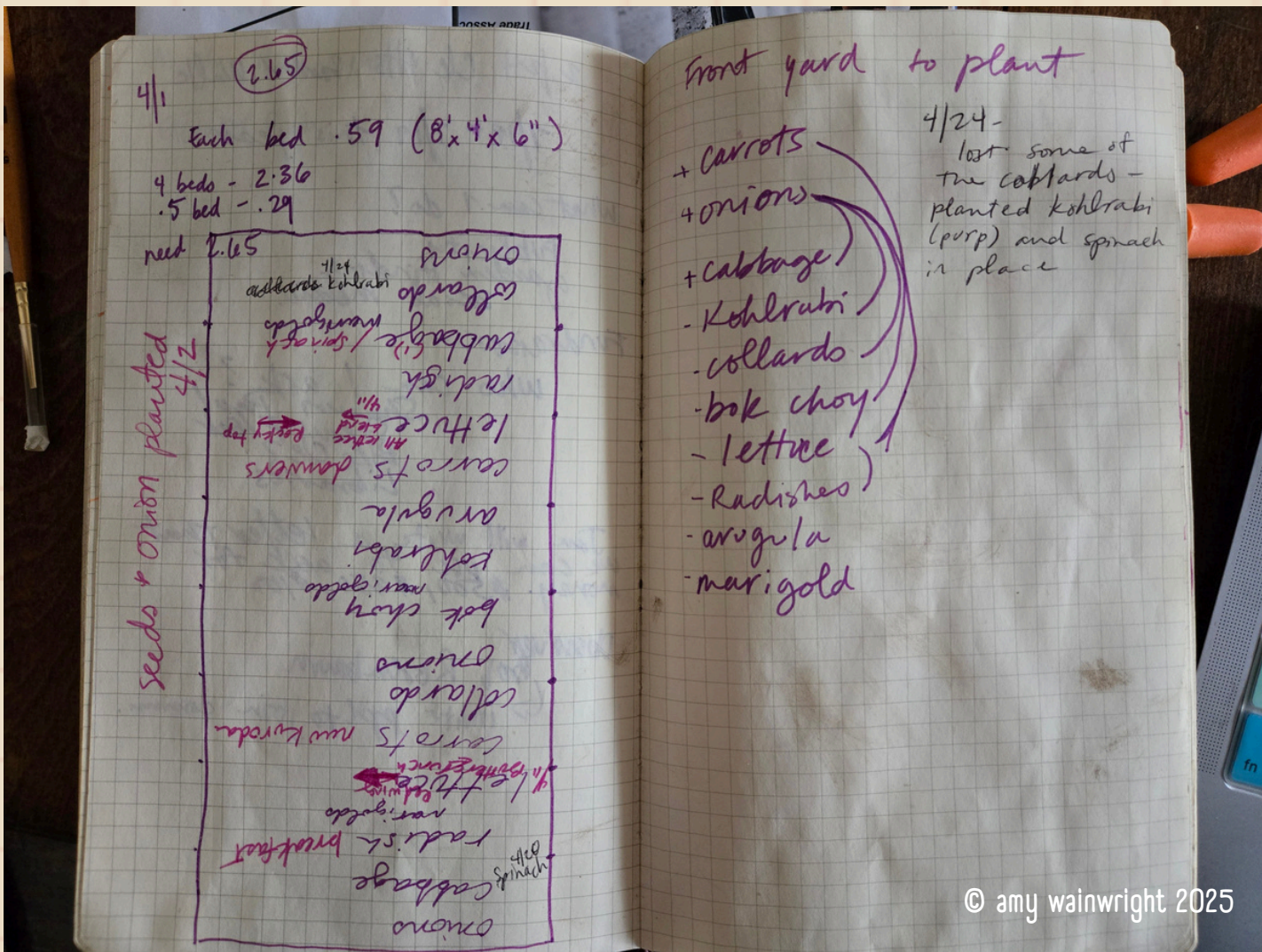
Local seed swaps

Seed starting calendar

Find your last frost

these are just some of the sites I use, feel free to find others you're more comfortable with

Groundwork



Groundwork

extras from our conversation!

Building raised beds – this article has a great set of instructions, also includes why it's good to build raised beds

Materials and methods to fill raised beds (for less money) – we discussed the hugelkultur method, which uses logs as a base, then sticks, mulch, grass clippings or leaves, and finally soil. A couple of cheap/free sources of wood chips chipdrop.com and local chip piles (Shaker Lakes and Forest Hills are 2 places with known wood chip piles you can take from).

Growing food with little space – so much food will grow happily in containers, often the limit is if they're getting enough nutrients and water. Many common veggies have container-friendly varieties. For people with access to a small garden plot, square foot gardening may work well (this link includes info about companion planting – kind of like plants that are besties).

Hand pollination – can be used outside, but we mostly talked about it as a possibility for trying to grow food indoors, you'll need to hand pollinate since you won't really have bugs to do it for you!

Get growing

Seed starting mix
but why?

Read your seed packets

Ways to start seed

Seed starting mix



Tilth, just one
recommended source



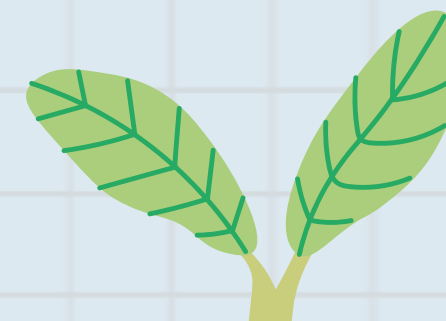
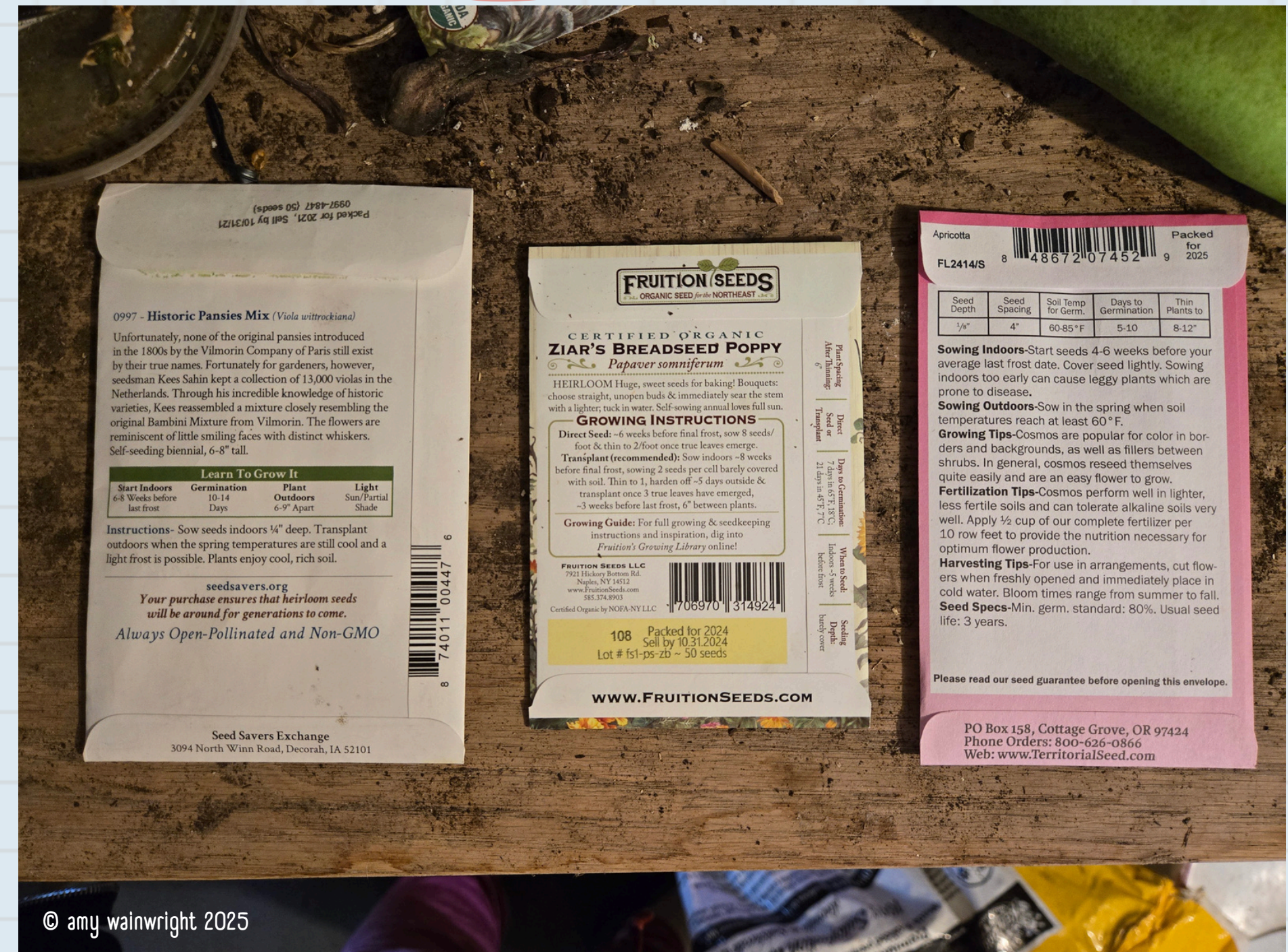
Get growing

Seed starting mix

Read your seed packets

Ways to start seed

How to read a seed packet



Get growing

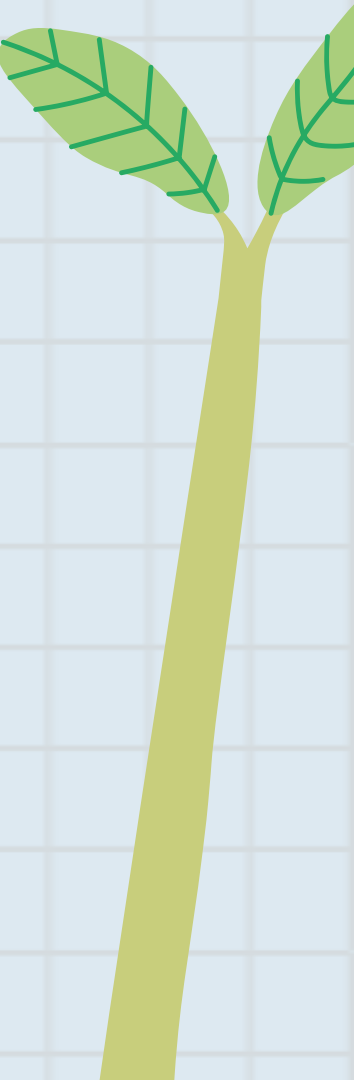
Seed starting mix

Read your seed packets

Ways to start seed

So many ways to start seed

- Special seed starting trays
- Pods (least efficient/sustainable)
- Soil blocking
- Toilet paper rolls
- Egg cartons
- Newspaper
- Direct sow



So many ways to start seed

Get growing



Egg shells / in an egg carton



Specialized seed starting trays



Soil blocking

Get growing

So many ways to start seed

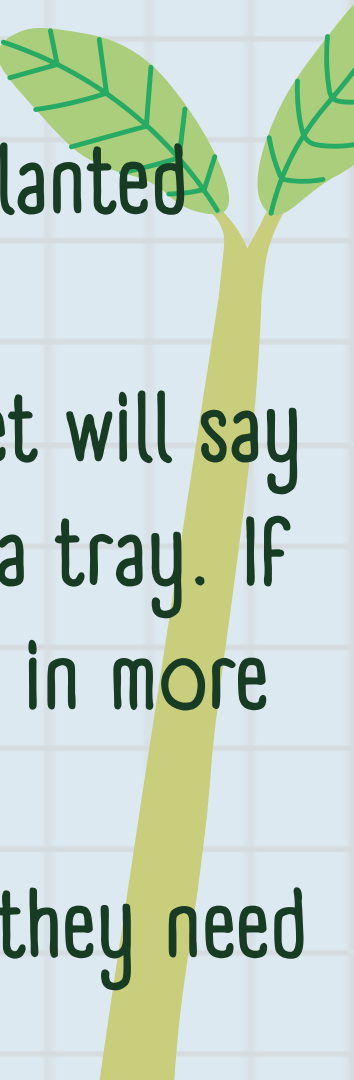
extras from our
conversation!

We had conversations about:

how deep to plant seeds – usually related to how large the seeds are, bigger seeds likely need to be planted deeper, find this info on your seed packet!


how many seeds per square in your tray or seed starting container – if your seed is fresh (the seed packet will say “packaged for 2025” or current year) usually I’ll plant seeds roughly an inch apart – often 2 per cell of a tray. If your seed is older, can add more because it’s likely that not all of the seeds will sprout. try not to put in more than this, you’ll need to separate your seedlings and their roots will be delicate!

if you aren’t using a conventional seed tray, make sure to poke holes in the bottom of your container, they need drainage!



Taking care of babies



Keep your soil  moist

Spray/mist 1-2 times a day, also will need to water about once a day



Probably need a lot of light



Some seedlings need heat too!

Tomatoes and peppers really need a heat mat, something like this

If you have a very sunny window (direct sunlight for at least 6 hours a day), you can get away without needing a grow light. Grow bulbs are fairly affordable (I have these) or you could buy this and put it in something like a desk lamp

Taking care of
babies



Planting up/Potting up



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Taking care of babies



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Hardening off

Need a sheltered location – protection from direct sunlight and wind.

Examples: a porch, fire escape, random courtyard, even on the ground behind bushes/trees

Aftercare

Fertilizers

Staking/cages

Pruning

Diagnosing problems

Harvesting!



THE END

I'll be sharing this and linking/hosting it on my website. Based on your questions and the conversation, I'll add more resources!

Amy Wainwright @amyrwainwright /
@witchandpickle



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Rhubarb coming up in late March!

