

5 Steps To Starting Milkweed Seeds Indoors

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It is worth noting that cold stratifying your seeds increases germination rates but is *not* absolutely necessary. The most important thing is that you get them planted. Most milkweed is a perennial in the lower 48 states so even if you are getting off to a late start, have no fear, they will come back next year and feed the next generations!

Step 1: Gather your materials

You Will Need:

A clean seed tray (a baking pan works well too)

Seed cells

Sterilized seed starting mix

Milkweed seeds

Water

It is best to use a designated seed starting mix because it is lighter and less dense than regular potting soil, which allows the roots to establish more easily. Milkweed is slender and doesn't need much room to grow so go ahead and plant many seeds!

Step 2: Add soil

I like to pour a heaping amount of soil mix onto the center of my seed insert and then spread it evenly with the edge of my seed packet or anything with a straight edge. I then gently tap the bottom of the seed tray on a flat surface to let the soil mix settle just a bit.



Step 3: Make holes

I like to use the eraser-end of a pencil to get $\frac{1}{4}$ in holes in my soil. It's a convenient and consistent way to get uniform sized holes. I have also sprinkled the seeds on top of the soil and then sprinkled a layer of soil over them with success



Step 4: Plant your seeds

Place 1-3 Milkweed seeds in each hole. Placing multiple seeds in each hole will increase your chances of getting a seedling in each cell. Then, gently push the soil mix back over your seeds.



Step 5: Water

Watering from the bottom up is the recommended method because it won't disturb the seedlings and will also prevent over-watering. Simply pour about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water into the tray then place the seed inserts on top. I like to use a water mister to also spray the top layer of my seed tray and then cover with a plastic lid or plastic wrap to keep the seeds moist. Remove the lid after a few days so that the seeds get air-flow and mold does not develop.



Lastly...

For 3-5 days, your seeds won't need light but a seed heating mat will help them to germinate. Once they sprout, immediately put them in a sunny window or under a grow light. If you wait too long they may get "leggy" from lack of sunlight or become moldy.

If they start to look leggy, you know that they need more light. You can plant your Milkweed outside after the danger of frost has passed. Check [here](#) to find out when the last frost date is for your region.

Plant the Milkweed and the Monarchs will come!