



# Agri Articles

(e-Magazine for Agricultural Articles)

Volume: 04, Issue: 05 (SEP-OCT, 2024)

Available online at <http://www.agriarticles.com>

© Agri Articles, ISSN: 2582-9882

## Raising Annuals under Glass

(\*G. Sathish)

Associate Professor (Hort.), Regional Research Station, Vridhachalam, Cuddalore

\*Corresponding Author's email: [sathish@tnau.ac.in](mailto:sathish@tnau.ac.in)

When you grow your own plants from seed you have better control of their quality and timing. Most of the favorite bedding plants can be sown in the green-house from about mid to late spring (March to April). It is a good idea to sow seeds from the packet over a period of time so you can enjoy a long flowering period.

How you sow can be varied to suit the cost, quantity and size of the seed. Large seeds (like Zinna) should be sown individually in small pots. Finer seed should be sown in a tray or pan; prick out the seedlings into more trays when they are large enough to handle. Instead of pricking out you can then thin the seedlings by pulling out the excess and discarding them.

For germinating seed use a sterilized seed compost and make sure that it is moist. A useful rule is to cover the seed with its own depth of compost. Very fine or dust-like seed, however, should not be covered.

After sowing cover the seed containers with glass and then a sheet of brown paper or newspaper. Some form of propagator will be most helpful for germinating the seeds. For bedding plants high temperatures are undesirable. Too much heat will force the seedlings and they will become spindly, pale and weak. A temperature of 7-18<sup>0</sup>C is adequate for most plants. There are inexpensive small electric propagators for warming only one or two seed trays, and designs that are heated by paraffin oil lamp. Many people manage to germinate the odd trays of seeds in their homes on the window sill of a warm room.

Germination time may vary from a couple of days to several weeks depending on the type of seed and temperature. Remove the containers cover when the first seedlings are through – but exposure to bright sunlight in the early stages can be harmful.

Pricking out should be done as soon as the seedlings are big enough to handle easily. In the case of very tiny seedlings such as *Lobelia*, small groups can be 'patched out' since it is impossible to separate them. When pricking out be generous with your spacing so the roots do not become entangled and damaged when the young plants are divided for planting out. After pricking out, water the seedlings with a Cheshunt compound to help prevent damping-off disease.

All bedding plants must be given a period of gradual acclimatization to the open air before planting out - 'hardening off'. In the greenhouse itself move the seed trays to cooler spots and move the trays to frames outside three weeks before you intend to bed them out.



*Nemesia strumosa* whose cut flowers last well in water



**Clarkia, used mainly as border decoration, or can be grown for cutting**



**Zinnia elegans, Envy, a showy plant**