



# How To Make A Styrofoam Seedling Box

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Autumn is brassicas seedling (cabbage, broccoli Brussels sprouts and cauliflower) planting time. They are one of the easiest seedlings to grow and the best way to grow them is in a Styrofoam seedling box.

### Collecting the box

While there are a number of different types of styrofoam boxes available that can be used to grow seedlings in one of the commonest is the broccoli styrofoam box. They are usually available from green grocers for free, just go in and ask for one.

### Making the seedling box

#### 1. Drilling the holes

Styrofoam broccoli boxes are watertight so the first thing to do is drill some holes in the bottom of the box for drainage. The holes have to be big enough to allow water to drain away but not too big that soil can easily fall through. I usually use an eight millimetre drill bit to make the holes. You can also drill some holes in the sides for added drainage.

#### 2. Lowering the height of the box

A broccoli box has fairly high sides, it is better to reduce the height of the box to make it more manageable. Take a pencil and mark a line ten centimetres from the top of the box, then with a serrated knife cut this top section off.



LEFT: Cutting off the top of the Styrofoam box.

RIGHT: Cutting out the side air vents.

#### 3. Cutting the side air vents

If you want to put a sheet of glass over the top to turn it into a hot box (recommended for growing seedlings in cool weather) then you will have to provide air vents so the seedlings don't overheat. To do this cut six to eight V sections out of the top at regular intervals. The Vs can

vary in size but should not be deeper than six centimetres.

### Optional extras

**GLASS COVER:** Cut a sheet of three millimetre glass the same size as the top of the Styrofoam box. When placed on top of the box the glass turns it into a hot box suitable for growing seedlings in cool weather.

**WELDMESH SCREEN:** Useful when growing brassicas seedlings. As soon as these seedlings are big enough cabbage butterflies will start laying eggs on them. To stop them doing this you can make a simple screen out of weldmesh to place over the box.



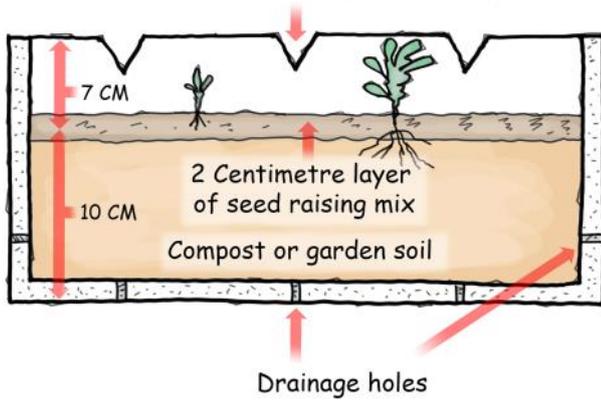
TOP: Completed Styrofoam box with glass on top to turn it into a seedling hot box. BOTTOM: Weldmesh screen over brassicas seedlings to stop cabbage butterflies laying eggs on them.

### Planting out your seedling box

Fill the box with compost or good quality soil until it is about 10 to 12 centimetres from the top. Add some blood and bone or NKP fertiliser and mix in. If you are planting brassicas add a sprinkle of garden lime as they like an alkali soil.

## BROCCOLI STYROFOAM SEEDLING BOX

V cuts to provide air vents when a sheet of glass is placed on top



Cover the compost or soil with about two centimetres of seed raising mix. Ideally the top of the seed raising mix should be about seven centimetres below the top of the box. This height will give the seedlings enough space to grow if a sheet of glass is placed over the top of the box but not too deep to shade them out.

With side of your little finger mark out five or six rows about one cm deep, plant your seeds in the rows and pinch soil over the top with your thumb and forefinger. Given normal conditions the seedlings should be ready to plant out with four to five weeks.

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