

How to Grow Lemon Grass From Seed

Lemon grass is used in Asian cooking to impart a lemony-citrus taste. A native of India, this herb is known by many names with Lemon grass being the western name. When buying lemon grass seed, make sure you are buying *Cymbopogon citratus* seeds (the Latin name of culinary lemon grass). Lemon grass is not frost hardy, and is considered a tender perennial in most of the United States. Grow lemon grass in large containers in full sun, keep moist, and overwinter in a cool (45 degrees F) room.

Things You'll Need:

- Lemon grass seed (*Cymbopogon citratus*) (Don't worry you have the finest in your hand from Todd's Seed and Buy Wholesale Cheap)
- Seed starting flat
- Sterile soil-less seed starting mix
- Vermiculite
- Clear plastic bag or clear plastic wrap
- Seed starting mat
- 3-inch pot
- Sterile potting mix or compost
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1. Sow lemon grass seeds from mid January through early March.
2. Fill a seed starting mat with moistened, sterile, soil-less seed starting mix.
3. Sprinkle lemon grass seed over the mat. Cover with a thin layer of vermiculite.
4. Place the mat in a clear plastic bag, or cover with plastic.
5. Place in a warm room out of direct sunlight. Lemon grass seeds germinate at 70 to 75 degrees F. Place the covered flat on a seed starting mat set at 72 degrees F. To be safe, make sure the plastic is not touching the mat.
6. Keep the seed starting mat moist, not wet, before and after the seeds germinate.
7. Lemon grass seeds will germinate between 21 and 40 days. When the seedlings are large enough to handle, gently lift out of the seed starting mat. Place the seedlings in individual 3-inch pots filled with sterile potting mix or compost.

Tips & Warnings

- Make sure the lemon grass seeds you buy are *Cymbopogon citratus*. Lemon grass is considered a tender perennial in most parts of the U.S. Consider planting the adult plant in a large container and overwintering indoors.
- If you start lemon grass from seed later than March, you will not be able to harvest that summer, but will have to overwinter plants and start harvesting the next spring.

ALTERNATE METHOD:

Step 1

Choose a 10- to 12-inch diameter pot that has drainage holes in the bottom. Use traditional planters, hanging baskets or drill 1/4-inch drainage holes into a recycled container.

Step 2

Mix one part compost with one part peat moss and one part vermiculite. Fill the pot to within 2 inches of the rim with this potting mix.

Step 3

Plant the lemongrass seeds into the pot just barely below the surface of the soil mixture. Lemongrass seeds germinate at 70-75 degrees.

Step 4

Water the soil after planting until the excess moisture drains from the bottom of the pot. Water when the top of the soil begins to feel dry, always adding the water until the excess begins draining.

Step 5

Place the germinated lemongrass outside in summer in an area that receives at least eight hours of sun a day. Bring it indoors before the first fall frost and place it in a sunny, warm window.

Step 6

Fertilize lemongrass with a half-strength balanced soluble fertilizer. Fertilize the grass every seven to 10 days to replace the nutrients that are washed out of the pot during watering.