

Alternatives For Starting Seeds

Dear Plant Doctor: I would like to start my own vegetable plants this year. I have been told a greenhouse is very expensive to build and maintain, but is there an alternative to a greenhouse?

Your suggestions or comments would be appreciated.
Wilmington, NC

Answer: Vegetable and many ornamental plant seed can easily be started in cold frames, hot beds, under artificial lights, in window boxes, and in greenhouses.

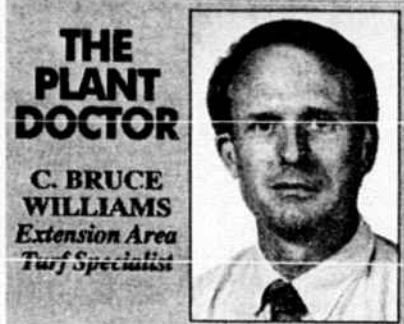
The least expensive and easiest structure to build is a cold frame. A simple cold frame can be constructed of wood, bricks, cinder blocks, or a combination of those materials. Cold frames have been used to get a jump on vegetable production for nearly 500 years.

In general a cold frame should be 6 to 8 inches below the soil surface, have solid sides of wood or masonry, and a transparent or translucent covering that can easily be lifted for ventilation. The back of the frame should be 6 to 9 inches higher than the front.

The front may vary in height from 6 to 12 inches—taller structures cast more shadows! Old window sashes, old storm doors or windows, or a plastic-film-covered wooden frame will make an inexpensive transparent cover for your cold frame. Pay special attention to ventilating your cold frame since young plants can get "cooked" on warm days.

A cold frame can be converted to a hot bed by simply installing a thermostatically controlled heating cable (available at most garden centers) in soil of the root bed. A single 2.5-by-6-foot cold frame or hot bed can produce hundreds of vegetable and ornamental plants if properly managed. Be sure to locate your cold frame or hot bed where you get ample direct sunlight.

Another alternative is to build a greenhouse. Glass or rigid-plastic-



THE PLANT DOCTOR
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covered greenhouses can be quite expensive to construct and maintain. However, an inexpensive and economical alternative does exist.

Contrary to popular opinion, a small unheated greenhouse can be built for under \$125 providing you are willing to do the construction yourself. North Carolina State University engineer Dr. M.D. Boyette and nursery specialist, Dr. Ted Bilderback, put together a terrific publication that lists all the materials and complete directions for building a 12-by-14-foot greenhouse.

This greenhouse is constructed of ½-inch PVC (schedule 80), treated wood, a roll of 4 mil plastic, ½-inch galvanized EMT tubing, and lots of PVC cement.

Complete construction details can be obtained by sending me a SASE or requesting the publication "A Small Backyard Greenhouse for the Home Gardener—AG426" from your North Carolina Cooperative Extension office in your home county.

A small greenhouse is useful for starting vegetable or ornamental plants, overwintering houseplants, and growing orchids or other exotic plants. However, maintaining a greenhouse is similar to maintaining a dairy farm—certain chores must be done every day or you are inviting a catastrophe.

Dear Plant Doctor: I saw you on TV the other day and you were talking about a list of specialty plant

catalogs.

Could you send me that list?
Answer: I get dozens of nursery and specialty plant catalogs every year. This year, with the help of the Brunswick County Master Gardeners, a list of all these companies was compiled. This list is constantly being updated, but I will be glad to send you a current edition if you send me a SASE (stamped self-addressed envelope) with your request.

Send your gardening questions and comments to the Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, NC 28422.

Booths To Offer Scout Cookies

Girl Scout cookies are still available for local residents who haven't had an opportunity to place an order.

Vickie Poole of the Brunswick Unit of Coastal Carolina Girl Scout Council said cookies are expected to be delivered in this area Feb. 26.

Girl Scouts will staff cookie booths at various times and locations, including Wilson's and Wal Mart, Shallotte, March 4 and 5; Wal Mart, Shallotte, and Food Lion, Seaside, March 11 and 12; Food Lion, Shallotte, March 12; and Olde Brunswick General Store, Boiling Spring Lakes, March 3 and 4.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

VFW Auxiliary Presents Flags

The Ladies Auxiliary of Holden Beach VFW Post 8866 recently presented United States flags to every classroom at Supply Elementary School. Americanism awards also were given to K-3 students who could recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Pictured (from left) are Principal Carolyn Williams and auxiliary members Jackie Dilley, Bertie Callan, June Wright, Aliese Grissett, Joann Gunn and Miriam Speicher.

Coloring Contest Open To Local Third-Graders

A countywide "Crack Down on Drugs" coloring contest for third-graders is being sponsored by the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department.

A McGruff "Say No To Drugs" coloring book will be delivered to each primary school with contest information. Each third-grader is invited to enter this fourth

annual contest.

Entries must be returned to the parks department by March 1 for judging. A panel will choose a winner from each school, as well as one countywide winner.

For more information, call Emma T. McGraw, special events coordinator, at 253-4357, or 1-800-222-4790.

South Brunswick Students Win At Health Occupations Congress

Several South Brunswick High School were winners in the regional Health Occupations Society congress held recently at Purnell Sweet High School in Lumberton.

They are Tarella Bryant, third place, courtesy; Angela Griffin, fourth place, dental spelling; JoHara Hankins, first-place, prepared and extemporaneous speaking; Jessica Litchy, third place, medical assistant clerical; Corey McCoy, fifth place, extemporaneous health display; Mellanie Ross, first place, medical assistant clerical; Kay Stidham, second place, medical assistant clerical, and fifth place, extemporaneous speaking; Shenicka Williams, second place, extemporaneous writing; and Ronald Young, first place, medical spelling.

They will compete in April at the state convention in Greensboro.

Among the top ten were Jacinda Gardner in job seeking skills; Tasha McCollum in extemporaneous health display, and Quandra Smith, extemporaneous writing.

South Brunswick is in Region 2, which includes more than 25 schools. Carolyn Hankins is health occupations teacher and club advisor.

Bus Course Set

A school bus driver course will be held Feb. 21-23 on the Brunswick Community College Supply campus from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

All prospective bus drivers must have a valid North Carolina driver's license and no two moving violations within the past 12 months.

Planting Time!

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Prices in this ad good Wednesday, Feb. 16 thru Tuesday, Feb. 22, 1994. We Reserve The Right To Limit Quantities.