

# FACT SHEET:

## On Farm Care of Seedlings

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Commercial farmers and homeowners regularly purchase nursery plants to establish their farms or home gardens. Nursery operators carefully cultivate these small plants under controlled environment with tender loving care. Small plants from a nursery require special care to help establish these plants in open field conditions.

### Step 1

Transport the plants home in a cool car. Do not leave the plants inside a closed vehicle for long duration. Temperatures inside a closed car reach well over 37 degrees Celsius and can rapidly kill small nursery plants.

### Step 2

Place the small nursery plants in a sheltered location featuring partial shade. Select a spot such as under the canopy of a mature shade tree or under a porch. This spot should feature at least a few hours of sun each day, but protection from wind and rain.

### Step 3

Water the small plants carefully on the soil around the base of each plant until water runs freely from the drainage holes of the transplant pot.

### Step 4

Press one finger into each pot to check for dryness in the transplant pots. Any dryness below the soil surface requires immediate watering. Seedlings and small plants cannot tolerate drying out. Provide water regularly and monitor soil moisture levels for two to three days while the small nursery plants acclimate to outdoor conditions.

### Step 5

Select transplant locations for the small plants in your garden or farm to match light and soil requirements for each plant. Cultivate the soil to a fine tilth to encourage root development. Always use compost on top of the planting spot and work it into the soil.





### Step 6

Dig a hole as wide and as deep as the transplanting pot. Press each side of the transplant pot to loosen bound roots and compacted soil. Tip the plant into your hand or lift gently by the main stem. Score the root ball lightly with your fingers if it seems tangled and compacted.

### Step 7

Place the small plant into the planting hole. Fill in around the roots with soil and press firmly with your hands.

### Step 8

Mix a half-strength solution of water-soluble plant fertilizer and soak the soil around the main plant stem. Monitor the soil moisture levels daily to determine if the plant requires water. Gradually reduce the watering frequency as the nursery plant matures until the plant tolerates the common 1 inch of water per week from rainfall or the garden hose.

