

# HOW TO ACCLIMATE EARLY SEASON CROPS AKA..HARDENING OFF

IN THE EARLY SPRING, WEATHER IS QUITE UNPREDICTABLE HERE IN NEW ENGLAND. ALTHOUGH EARLY SEASON SEEDLINGS CAN BE PLANTED IN THE BEGINNING OF SPRING THEY NEED TO ACCLIMATE TO THE OUTDOOR TEMPERATURE FLUCTUATIONS BEFORE THEY CAN BE LEFT TO THRIVE IN THE OUTDOORS.



**MAKE SURE YOUR TENDER NEW PLANTS ARE READY FOR THE WORLD BY SLOWLY TRANSITIONING THEM TO THE OUTDOORS!**

NIGHT-TIME TEMPERATURE WILL DETERMINE HOW LONG THIS PROCESS WILL TAKE. IF TEMPS ARE CONSISTENT PLANTS WILL ACCLIMATE FASTER THAN IF THERE ARE GREAT DIPS IN DEGREES THROUGHOUT THE DAYS AND NIGHTS. BE PATIENT AND BE CAUTIOUS, BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN TO LOSE A PLANT!

## HOW TO HARDEN OFF YOUR PLANTS:

- START TO HARDEN OFF 1-2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR PLANTING DATE (VARIETIES WILL DIFFER REFER TO PLANTING CHARTS). BEST THAT THE TEMPS ARE ABOVE 40° DURING THE DAY.
- SELECT A PLACE OUTSIDE IN THE SHADE, PROTECTED FROM WIND. (A PORCH IS USUALLY A GOOD OPTION)
- WATER YOUR PLANTS BEFORE PLACING OUTSIDE, BUT DO NOT EXPOSE THEM TO RAIN AND NEVER LET THEM BE SOGGY.
- HAVE FROST CLOTHS ON HAND IN CASE OF SUDDEN DRASTIC CHANGES OR FROST FORECASTS. IN THIS EVENT COVER OVER THE TENDER SEEDLINGS UNTIL THE EXTREME WEATHER PASSES.

### TIMING FOR GRADUAL ACCLIMATION:

\*\*\* DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD CHECK PLANTS DAILY FOR SIGNS OF STRESS (WILT, DROOPING, SCORCHING) ADJUST PROCESS ACCORDINGLY IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE SIGNS OF SHOCK.

- DAYS 1-3. PLACE PLANTS IN YOUR PROTECTED, SHADED SPOT FOR 2-4 HOURS, BRING BACK INSIDE AT NIGHT.
- DAYS 4-7 GRADUALLY INCREASE THE TIME YOUR PLANTS ARE OUTDOORS BY ADDING 1 HOUR EACH DAY. GRADUALLY EXPOSE THEM TO LIGHT WINDS AND DAPPLED SUNLIGHT AS WELL.
- DAYS 8-14 START BRINGING SEEDINGS OUTSIDE EARLY IN THE MORNING SO THEY ARE EXPOSED TO THE COLD PRIOR TO THE SUN WARMING THEM UP DURING THE DAY, GRADUALLY ALLOW MORE AND MORE SUNLIGHT.



IDEALLY, AFTER THIS PROCESS YOUR PLANTS SHOULD BE READY TO BE PLANTED IN THEIR OUTDOOR HOME TO GROW AND FLOURISH HOWEVER...

**MONITOR THE PLANTS AND THE FORECAST DAILY. BE PREPARED TO COVER PLANTS IF FROST OR EXTREME WEATHER IS PREDICTED.**