



Greenhouse Pest Message February 16, 2024

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Tips on Transplanting Plugs

- Check plugs upon arrival for any signs of insects, diseases, or physical damage. Taking photographs is helpful, as your supplier wants to know of any issues ASAP.
- Water thoroughly with clear water and be sure the plugs at the edge of the tray are thoroughly moist.
- After initial watering, apply a light application of 50 to 60 ppm N2 at every other watering.
- Let plants acclimate to your greenhouse conditions for 1 to 2 days before transplanting.

When you are ready to transplant:

- Water plug trays thoroughly 2 to 3 hours before transplanting so that the root ball can be easily removed from the plug tray.
- Do not transplant dry, water stressed plugs.
- Pre-fill containers with pre-moistened growing media. Pre-dribble holes for the plugs.
- Never “nest” filled flats.
- Use a plug popper to gently remove root balls from the plug tray.
- Plant plugs at the same depth as the original plug.
- Thoroughly train and supervise your workers, especially any less experienced workers so that plugs are planted at the proper depth. Keep a close eye on their work throughout the day. Plugs that are planted too deep are more vulnerable to crown and root rot diseases or root death simply due to the lack of oxygen.



Figures 1 & 2: Lavender and begonia plugs planted too deeply. Photos by L. Pundt.

For more:

Flax, N. 2020. Impact of Transplanting Practices on Plant Establishment and Health. E-Gro Alert. https://www.e-gro.org/pdf/2020_925.pdf

Owen, W. Garrett. 2024 Transplanting Tips E Gro Blog
<https://www.egroblog.com/showblog.php?ID=214>

After the crops are transplanted, be sure to group them according to temperature needs (cold season compared to warm season) and pH needs.

Mastering the Mix with 2024 Sponsors Strategic Crop Groupings <https://www.e-gro.org/pdf/2024-13-07.pdf>

pH and fertility review of Specialty Propagated Annuals <https://ag.umass.edu/greenhouse-floriculture/fact-sheets/ph-fertility-review-for-vegetatively-propagated-annuals>

Preventing Algae in Vegetable Transplants

Onions and leeks are some of the earliest vegetable seedlings started in the greenhouse. Algae can form a crust on the surface of the growing media.

It is best to prevent algae growth.

- Clean and sanitize greenhouse floors benches and plug trays before use.
- Avoid overwatering especially on cloudy, overcast days.
- Plant your slower growing leeks and onions in smaller plug trays (i.e. 288 celled plug trays) so the growing media does not stay overly moist and the seedlings can dry out.
- Use a well-drained growing media, adding perlite if that works with your production plan.



Figure 3 & 4: Algae and moss on growing media with slow growing Allium plants and crust forming on growing media surface. Photos by L. Pundt

Funding provided by USDA NIFA CPPM grant 2021-70006-35582.

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