Published on *Kitchen Gardeners International* (http://kgi.org)

Time to harden off seedlings

Thu, 05/02/2013 - 23:50 -- johannagreen

It time to harden off seedlings here in the Mountain West. I don't know about you, but I find this to be the most stressful part of the seed to seedling to garden process. I use 2 different techniques to acomplish this. For tomatoes I am a big fan of walls of water and find that I can transplant into my garden beds at least 2 weeks sooner with the WOW. This translates to tomatoes in July, which for my family marks a big milestone in the garden. For my other seedlings I follow the process below:

1. Watch the weather and when day temps are >60F I start to gradually introduce my plants to the garden. I set them out in progressively longer inrervals over the course of 1-2 weeks until the can spend the whole day (and hopefully overnight) outside.

2. During this time, I cut back on water just a little. This usually translates to every other day watering but I break that rule if the seedling leaves look wilted.

3. Once nighttime temps are >50F and the above steps have been acomplished, I plant a "test" plant for each variety and watch for 1-2 days. If still alive and looking good I go ahead and transplant my remaining seedlings.

The cheat to this, at least if you live in Salt Lake City like I do, is that if you harden off in time for Mother's Day you can usually get away with your seedlings being planted on that ot the following weekend.

Can't wait to get these beautiful seedlings into the ground!

Image (optional):

Type:
general [1]
Season:
spring [2]
Topics:
seed-starting and planting [3]
Group content visibility:
Use group defaults
Promoted text:
Time to harden off seedlings

Source URL: http://kgi.org/blog/johannagreen/time-harden-seedlings

Links:
[1] http://kgi.org/blog-type/general
[2] http://kgi.org/season/spring
[3] http://kgi.org/topics/seed-starting-and-planting