

The Pandemic: a Gardener's View



It's been a tough week. Because of what I do for a living, I'm unable to unplug and decompress amidst all this. I feel overwhelmed, exhausted, and mentally spent. But while the future seems uncertain and I'm anxiety-ridden at all hours, I try my hardest to look on the bright side. It could always be worse. Of course, that realization leads me to the reality that there are so many people right now who are in dire straits and worse off. So, in the end, my attempt at a positive outlook fails me.

Still, if I quiet my mind for a moment, I'm able to appreciate some of the small miracles around me. It's seed starting season, and it's been hard to focus on all the tasks I've needed to get done. I've lost track of what needs to be started when! But seeing those little seedlings pop up from

the soil is always awe-inspiring. What lessons have I learned from gardening that apply to this pandemic?

Keeping Things Clean

My [tomato](#), pepper, and eggplant starts are healthy as ever. The soil blocks are holding strong, and I can see the sturdy roots developing. Oddly enough, seeing my [seedlings](#) doing so well made me think about the link between gardening and this pandemic. Gardeners, better than most, can appreciate the importance of proper sanitization and hygiene. The invisible pathogens that live in the soil, on garden tools, and on accessories all have the potential to obliterate seedlings and crops. On a conceptual level, I understand that hand washing and disinfecting surfaces is vital to stop the transmission of the virus, and I've been rigorously doing my part to maintain personal hygiene and [socially distance](#) myself. But as a gardener who has seen the plant-related consequences of poor hygiene and contamination, I'm keenly aware of the importance of social distancing and hand washing.

The Ultimate Lesson

If you're a gardener who has never dealt with damping-off or diseases caused by contaminated soil, you're incredibly lucky! But I suspect that plenty of dirt-digging enthusiasts can identify with the shock of watching everything you've worked hard to cultivate wilt and flop over. It's devastating. It's even more upsetting when you realize the fault was your own. As a beginner gardener, I wasn't careful with my trays and tools and didn't bother to wash [pots](#) anew each year. Why bother? It's natural! It's all going to be going in the dirt anyhow! Ah, what a naive gardener I was!

Today, I'm cautious to the point of being paranoid, but in the end, I've been rewarded with beautiful, strong seedlings that I can't wait to plant in the ground.

If there's a lesson here that relates to this unprecedented [world pandemic](#), it's that you're better off safe than sorry. [Wash your hands](#) and stay home. Let's all stay strong together.