

TEACHER POTTING ON CHECKLIST

1. SEEDLINGS

Before your seedlings arrive

Check your growing unit:

- ☐ Is clean, tidy and ready to use.
- ☐ Has no damage/wear. Let us know if anything needs repair.
- ☐ Lay a single layer of cardboard in the growing unit, enough for seedling trays to sit on (cover approx. ½ growing unit)

Check your irrigation system:

- ☐ If your irrigation system was disconnected, reconnect it.
- ☐ Do a manual test run for 1 minute. Let it finish by itself.
- ☐ Sprinkler jets are all working, and there are no dry spots
- ☐ Battery is showing full green in the Toro Timer app. If not, replace battery.
- ☐ Set your timer settings to 1 minute (or 2, if your facilitator advises), 3 x per day, 7 days per week. Make sure you save/send the changes.

Any problems with irrigation?

- ☐ If the test run did not work, or if water is running continuously, try troubleshooting using our [Teacher Timer Helpsheet](#)

How many of the following do you have at school? Count and let your facilitator know:

- ☐ Crates
- ☐ Quantity of recycled TfS planter bags from previous years planting i.e. equivalent to 1 full black rubbish bags OR 2 full onion bags
- ☐ Packets of new TfS planter bags

* Let your facilitator know if your landowner hasn't returned your crates and bags

Communicate with your facilitator:

- ☐ Let them know that you've done these checks
- ☐ Talk to them about dates for a Potting On session
- ☐ Get in touch with them ASAP if there are any problems with your growing unit /irrigation.

When your seedlings arrive

- On the same day that they arrive, make sure seedlings are taken out of their box (if in one), watered, and put into the growing unit, with auto watering (as above) – this is vital!
- Text your facilitator to let them know that your seedlings have arrived safely.
- Keep an eye on your seedlings, checking them frequently until potting on day. When soil moisture is at the correct level, the potting mix will feel damp, not soggy, not dry. If you notice they look dry, give them an extra water and ask your facilitator for advice ASAP. If they look very wet, ask your facilitator for advice ASAP.



2. GETTING READY FOR POTTING ON

Potting your seedlings up properly gives them the best start in life, with strong, healthy, well-shaped root systems to anchor them soundly as adult trees.

Your Facilitator is the best person to help ensure successful potting up. They can help streamline the process and ensure best technique for successful growth - let them guide you. Please ask if you have any concerns or questions.

- *Consider inviting some adult helpers* - Many hands make light work. Involve your school community - parents, caretakers, other staff, sponsors and landowners can help students at your potting up sessions.
- *Have students and adults watch the:* [Lesson 1 - Potting On from Plugs](#).
- *Look at* [Legionnaire's Disease Advice](#) for your information and planning.
- *Decide where to run the potting session.* Fresh air, shelter, handy to the growing unit and a water source is ideal. Some adults find it easier to work on tables rather than the ground, but it's good to consider the height of your students – it's best not to have their faces at the same level as the potting mix.

Gather what you need for the session:

Must have:

- ☐ Seedlings, well-watered
- ☐ Gloves for all
- ☐ Potting mix
- ☐ Crates
- ☐ Planter bags (we use up recycled bags first)
- ☐ Watering cans to dampen potting mix
- ☐ Plasters to cover any cuts
- ☐ Something to pop plugs out of trays, e.g. popsicle sticks, pencils

Should have:

- ☐ Tables
- ☐ Tarps (essential if working over grass or astroturf)
- ☐ Brushes and pans for cleanup
- ☐ Sun protection

Could have:

- ☐ Wheelbarrow, trolley
 - ☐ Masks, if your school chooses to use them
 - ☐ Dibbers to make holes in soil (e.g. paint brush handles)
 - ☐ Music can be nice as you work
- * Scoops aren't needed. Hands are fine.

Potting mix is a freshly mixed, carefully balanced blend of organic and mineral matter, it gives your plants just the right proportions of air, moisture and slow-release nutrients for maintaining optimum growth and ideal soil temperature. So, you must look after it!

- ☐ Store bags in shed or cover with tarp to protect from sun, rain and theft. (Rain makes it wet and heavy)
- ☐ Stale potting mix from last year will not grow good plants. Use it in your garden beds



3. ON POTTING DAY

Before the session

- ☐ Bring all your supplies to the workspace before your facilitator arrives. This will save lots of time and allow everything to run to schedule.
- ☐ Make sure your seedlings in plug trays have had a drink and are not dry.

How to Pot On Seedlings

If you need to finish potting up after your session with your facilitator, keep the following in mind:

Work safely with potting mix

- TfS video [Lesson 1 - Potting On from Plugs](#)
- [Legionnaire's Disease Advice](#)

Crates, bags, and the growing unit

- Only our custom-made TfS planter bags should be used.
- Use old bags before new bags.
- Check you have 20 planter bags per crate (4 x 5).
- Be sure each crate has only one species in it.
- Label your crates with the plant species
- Continue the layout of crates in the growing unit suggested by your facilitator at your potting on session.
- Once growing unit is totally full, stop potting up and tell your facilitator.

Filling the bags

- Fill the bottom of the bag properly. Tap the base on the bench to settle soil down in bag (no baggy trousers! Do NOT thump the top of the bag to pack it in tightly).
- Fill the bag right up to the top, (no low tides!) it will subside a bit once watered.



Planting your seedlings

- Make a hole in soil in top of each filled bag. If soil is damp, it will stay open which makes it easier to plant.
- Carefully lift seedling out of plug tray, without damaging it. Squeezing the bottom of the cell works or you can use something to pop them out from the bottom, e.g. back of a pencil, popsicle stick.
- If the plug won't come out or falls apart because the roots are still developing, you can leave these in the tray, and pot them in a week or two.
- If any moss or liverwort is growing with the seedling, carefully remove this and throw it away.
- Hold seedling by its leaves, lower seedling into hole, and firm it into place, at the same depth it was before (seedling should not be buried too deep right up to its neck, or it will rot!).
- Check no roots are visible on soil surface, and it is standing upright not leaning (tuck your baby into bed gently but firmly).
- If you have two plants in the same plug, leave them together (don't split up the twins).
- You should have all the same plant species in the same crate (no aliens!). If you need more of a species to fill a crate, then CAREFULLY split up enough twins to finish off that ONE crate. Teacher to supervise this.
- If you take a break, don't leave any plants' roots uncovered in the hot sun.
- Keep the seedling trays for your facilitator to return/reuse.



Watering

- Load them into the shade house ASAP - don't leave them sitting in the hot sun.
- Water your potted seedlings with the irrigation system (10 min) as soon as possible after bagging them up. Water them thoroughly until water runs out of the drainage holes in the base of the bags. This is the most important drink they'll ever get.
- Once potting up is finished, change timer settings to 3 minutes, 2 x per day, 7 days per week. BUT if you have any plants still in plugs leave the timer set for 1 minute 3 x per day, until you finish potting all your plants.
- Once seedlings are settled in and growing well, the above watering times can be adjusted to less frequent watering but for a longer time. Talk to your facilitator about the best watering time for your growing unit.

