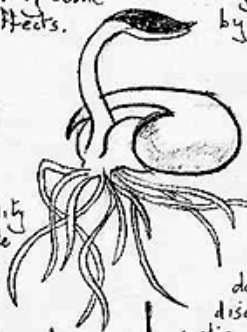


Are any of these symptoms familiar to you? Are you, or is someone you know afflicted with HSAD? Don't despair. Admitting your condition is half the battle won. You are not alone. Help is available. Support groups are forming. An emerging self-help literature outlining the latest advances in behavioral & cognitive therapies is leading the way in, if not placating the root HSAD dogmas, at least providing some small measure of relief from its most pernicious affects.

## PART TWO: STRESS REDUCTION

Planting calendars are an essential part of a gardener's life but, approached rigidly, their conviviality can enslave as much as liberate. At best, they provide a clear, timely sense of possibilities and priorities; a better awareness of patterns and rhythms; at worst, they fuel a dogmatic approach to raising plants at war with the contextual intelligence of each unique season, garden & life. For those contemplating the early Spring seeding flurry hereabouts, the best advice is, simply, WAIT.



The beginning seeding dates recommended in most planting calendars are not targets that experienced gardeners aim for. As a rule, people seed early either because they are inexperienced, or because they have a pressing incentive, usually economic, to do so. For farmers seeking a competitive advantage in bringing food to market first, the risks and challenges of raising robust and healthy plants are tempered by a wealth of resources, experience and time that make 'pushing the envelope' both possible and worthwhile.

### «LISTENING TO THE SEASONS»

Early seeding is simply not an issue of moving everything forward a month or two - seeding can be moved, but the seasons cannot. Among contributing complications, the plants grow much slower; they require greater protection from the weather; the cold, damp, changeable conditions of early Spring makes disease a pronounced threat; and readying transplants earlier demands favorable conditions and dirt to plant them into, earlier, too. If the right microclimate isn't available by the time the plants' root systems are in full swing,

## WHY START YOUR OWN TRANSPLANTS?

- ✦ Planting roots in the garden and bringing life from the soil are elemental acts that lend a healthy purpose and direction to our lives and bring peace to our souls. Raising plants from seed is fun, challenging, inspiring & deeply satisfying work.
- ✦ Do it right, and you will grow huskier transplants stronger than anything you can buy. Your plants won't have been 'forced' to look good for a sale.
- ✦ Varieties of plants offered by commercial transplant vendors represent just a tiny fraction of the varieties open to you.
- ✦ Grow plants yourself and you know how they have been grown and what has been used on them.

### WHY TRANSPLANT?

Growing transplants rather than direct seeding affords certain advantages. Among them:

- ✦ Seeds generally need higher temperatures to germinate than plants need to grow. Our soils don't warm up until it stops raining. By controlling seeding temperatures and by stewarding the ongoing microclimate toward conditions more favorable to growth, we can extend the growing season, raising plants earlier than raw nature allows.
- ✦ Some 'long-season' summer crops are marginal in our climate, with its cool summer nights. Giving them a jumpstart improves the likelihood of a mature, productive crop before the weather turns.
- ✦ Putting out transplants can help your plants avoid/outgrow slug/symphylan/cucumber beetle pressure that can flatten direct sown seedlings.
- ✦ Growing up transplants allows you to keep the beds they are headed into in other (cover) crops, longer.
- ✦ Transplants can make it easier to identify & manage weed seedlings.
- ✦ Direct seeding has its great advantages but, typically, only a small percentage of seed directly sown will mature into fully grown plants - what with thinning and other pressures. Raising transplants from seed allows you to ensure that 'every seed counts.'

## WHY NOT TO RAISE YOUR OWN TRANSPLANTS

- ✦ Attentiveness is the key to raising healthy plants. If you start seeds inside, you won't be able to step away from them from approximately February to May for more than 48 hours at a time - 24 hours if you're using a heatmat. If you continue to seed, the time commitment deepens. An extremely reliable plant sifter may be all that sits between you and, potentially, hundreds of dead or stressed plants. Some plants, such as brassicas (and cauliflower in particular) are particularly sensitive to stress. Even through initial appearances may continue to suggest that all continues to be well, even one occasion of stress as a start - one missed watering on an unexpectedly sunny day - is enough to ensure that the plant bolts or never sizes up once it goes in the ground. A supportive lifestyle is essential.