



Deep Root Trainers

The opening cell tray

How to use Root Trainers

1. Fold books in half and place all books, one-by-one, tightly together in the tray then lightly dampen.
2. Purchase a good quality, moist, multipurpose compost – pile compost over the tray and brush it into side and corner cells.
3. Agitate the tray to settle compost into the bottom of the cells. Top-up if necessary.
4. Brush off any excess compost to reveal the cell tops.
5. Add a little water with a watering can fitted with a rose.

Benefits of Root Trainers

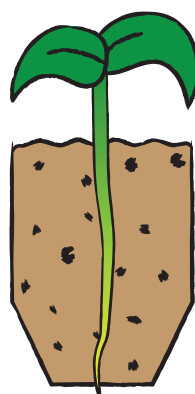
- Roots grow straight avoiding pot bound plants
- Moisture content and root can be inspected at any time
- Young plants are easily removed, without damage.
- Plants develop more quickly, giving the best possible start.
- No potting-on required
- Modular cell system to allow plants to be spaced out without re-potting.
- Root Trainers are re-usable and proven to have a lifespan of six years or more.

Root Trainers really are the perfect starting block for nearly all plants, especially those that are sensitive to disturbance and require deep root runs. Ideal for growing on seeds, seedlings, plugs and cuttings.

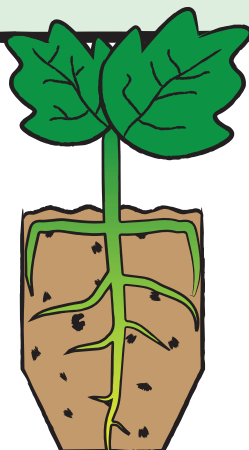
Air Pruning

The first roots race down the specially-made grooves to quickly emerge through the drainage holes. Root tips protruding out will die off naturally causing a high number of side roots to develop higher up the cell. This results in a compact, efficient root system, perfectly poised to feed and grow the plant.

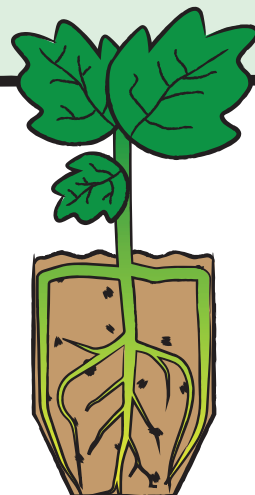
Root Trainers encourage optimum root formation, including strong roots, a fundamental requirement of healthy and successful plant growth. The rectangular shape of each cell provides a greater surface area, while the grooves allow for more roots to develop on the outside of the plug.



Drainage hole



Root end dies off



Many side roots grow straight down the grooves, preventing root spiralling.



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Watering

Root Trainers drain very well and care should be taken to provide an adequate water supply. Naturally, very small plants should not be over-watered, whilst larger plants should not be allowed to dry out. The opening facility helps in monitoring conditions. Root Trainers can be watered from below by placing the complete tray in a suitable container or the propagator lid, allowing the plants to soak. DO NOT leave in water too long.

Reuse

Root Trainers are reusable several times with care. They are easily washed or sterilised with the books in place.

Ready to plant

Ideal for cuttings – Take the cutting in the usual way, dip into rooting powder and insert one per cell. With large leafy plants use every other cell. Put the lid on the tray and place in a warm position inside a greenhouse or propagator (with plenty of light and humidity) until rooted.

Sowing Seed – For large seeds, such as beans and sweet peas, place one seed on the top of each cell. Using your finger, press each seed down to the correct depth. Dust a little compost over the seed, then treat as cuttings. As soon as the seeds begin to emerge, remove the lid or take from the propagator. Smaller seeds can first be sown in seed trays.

Pricking out – Prick out seedlings into Root Trainers, one per cell, before the first true leaf appears. Plant as deep as possible with seed leaves just clearing compost. This will produce strong stemmed plants with excellent roots.

Air Pruning – When roots emerge from the drainage holes, raise the Root Trainer tray from the bench by standing it on batons of wood or empty plant pots. This allows circulation of air below the tray, to dry off the root tips and encourage more roots in the cell (see diagram).

Checking root progress – For inquisitive gardeners Root Trainers are ideal. Since the cells open up like a book, you can see how well the roots are growing without disturbing the plants.

Planting out – The unique opening mechanism enables the plant to be easily removed without damaging the root system. Simply take each book from the tray, open it up to reveal plants that are ready and waiting. No need to tease out the roots, just pop them in the planting hold. Make sure the top of the plug is covered by soil and gently firm up, followed by watering.

Cultural Tips

Compost

We recommend that the compost used should be a medium coarse mix with a good open structure but not too fibrous. Additions of either composted bark, washed quartz, sand, perlite or vermiculite, should be added to maintain the structure and aid drainage. Too much sand is not recommended – not more than 2% - as the plug will be too loose and gritty to hold itself together.

Propagation

Seeds can be germinated or cuttings struck under normal cultural practice, with trays directly on the bench. Bottom heat and (or) mist plus an optional plastic covering can be used as required. Before transplanting outside, plants should be hardened off in a cold frame as normal.