

Transplanting seedlings protocol

Specification of particular brand names below does not imply an endorsement by USDA that they are necessarily superior to other comparable products

Seedlings are easiest to manipulate when about 3-6 cm tall (usually within two weeks of sowing), but seedlings may be transplanted very small since the artificial plug material is probably optimal for establishing weak seedlings



Make sure medium is moist.

Then trace around pot edge with stake or knife and remove seedling ball by tapping it out of the pot.



Gently separate seedlings with aim to minimize root tearing. Then partially tear apart an IHort® Q-plug (4x4x6 cm), and sandwich seedling deep enough so the top whorl of leaves is within 3 cm of the top of the plug. Even if transplanting is delayed so seedlings are very long, it will not hurt to bury the root and stem deep into the plug.



Close seedling into plug, place in 50 cell flats (no need to push down tight), and water as needed, as always, taking care not to overwater.



Plug stage lasts about 2-3 weeks. This two-stage transplanting (into Q plugs) is convenient for easy moving, sorting, selecting variable seedlings, and staging plantings, and it facilitates direct planting into the field. However, one-stage (direct) transplanting from the seedling pot to larger greenhouse pots also can be done with minimal attrition when one has uniform robust seedlings.