

Reading Selection

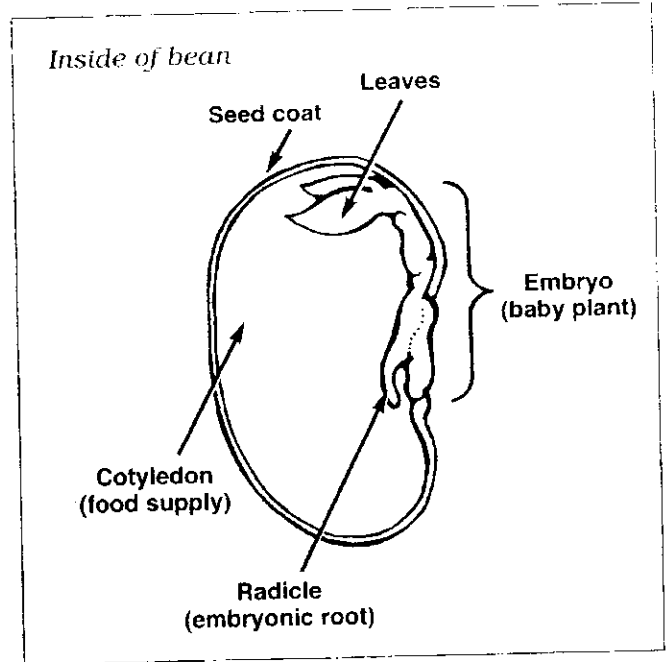
Growing Plants: How Seeds Spring to Life

Isn't nature amazing? Just give a seed water and the right temperature and watch it spring into new life.

Moisture is very important to sprouting, or **germination**. In your own terrarium, for instance, never allow seeds to dry out once you have planted them. Be sure to check your terrarium daily. Sprinkle it gently when the top of the soil surface seems dry.

Temperature is important, too. Most seeds will germinate at 22°C to 25°C (72°F to 78°F). This is a comfortable temperature for most people, too. So if you are comfortable, then probably all is well with your seeds.

It's interesting that most kinds of seeds do not need light to germinate. (That makes sense since they are under ground.) But once a plant sprouts from the seed, it needs lots of light to produce its own food.



Tiny Food Warehouse

So what happens before a plant gets into the light and can start making food? Each seed

carries along its own built-in warehouse of food. This gives it enough energy to start growing. Look at the picture of the inside of a bean seed.

Only a small part of the seed is the baby plant, or **embryo**. The rest is all stored food.

In nature, not every seed germinates. Can you think of some reasons why? Well, some are eaten, some rot, and some fall into places where they can't grow (rivers or paved walkways, for instance). That is why most plants produce so many seeds—to make sure that life continues, no matter what.

