

## Growing Primulas from Seed and Division

From Ed Buyarski with much advice from other Primrose growers

In February or March, begin with clean pots and new potting soil. I use 3 ½" pots-18 per tray. Fill the pots to within ½" of the rim and pour boiling water into each to help wet the dry soil. Allow to cool, then firm the soil by pressing with another clean pot of the same size. Thinly scatter seeds-as many as 20-30 per pot-and barely cover with small chick grit or a sprinkling of coarse sand or vermiculite.

Place the whole tray inside an old pillow case or cover with screen or horticultural fabric such as Reemay and put outside exposed to rain/snow or freezing temperatures for 2-4 weeks. The tray may be left outside to naturally sprout as the days get warmer or bring inside and place under lights to germinate more quickly at 60-70F. Indoors I have a clear cover over the tray until seedlings appear. Seedlings will appear depending on varieties in 10-40 days. If using fluorescent lights the tubes should be within 4" of the seedlings. Watering the pots is best done from the bottom so that the small seedlings are not disturbed if the planting tray is placed in another water holding tray. Every second or third watering can include some ½ strength liquid fertilizer also. The clear cover is also gradually removed to help harden the seedlings indoors. Never let the pots or seedlings dry out!

Once the seedlings have 3-4 true leaves they may be separated and transplanted into individual small pots or if larger placed directly into the ground after being gradually hardened off. They should be protected from slugs at this point. Again after transplanting, it is beneficial to cover the young plants with the horticultural fabric for a week or two to get them used to outside conditions. Watering as needed can be supplemented with some liquid fertilizer.

Existing plants may be divided in spring or summer depending on flowering time. Early bloomers are best divided after blooming and spent flowers are removed. Summer bloomers such as *P. alpicola*, *chungensis*, *japonica*, and *florindae* may be divided as soon as the ground thaws and the plants can be recognized.

Seeds and plants available from;

Ed's Edible Landscaping

907-209-8905

Juneau, Alaska