

In the Garden

Grow Your Seedlings Inside!



Hey there garden fans. It's so much fun starting seedlings inside your house and watching them grow. Trouble is that they often do not get enough sun and turn spindly and weak stemmed. What they need is more light. But how do you do that? My solution was to copy the design of a 3 tiered grow unit that a friend has. These units have a fluorescent light fixture hanging over the plants. As the plants need lots of light you need to use a timer. Now I bribed, goaded, whined, and baked my way into getting my long-suffering "other" to build me one. He used fir 2x2's and 2x4's to create my grow unit. Now if you wanted to buy a really nice one it would be \$900 before taxes from Vesey's plus shipping from P.E.I. Gak! That's a bit rich! So I am going to

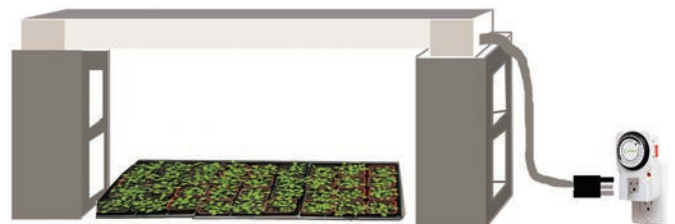
suggest how to make a nice grow unit for \$40. *Thanks, Fran!*

So the first thing you need is a fluorescent fixture. You can get them from the hardware store but I bet you have one in your garage or basement. Then go and find yourself 2 concrete bricks. Now go find yourself a timer. Sally Ann always has some in the electronics area. Take your bricks and balance either end of your fluorescent fixture on top of them. Make sure they are really steady and at least a foot above the table you put them on. Now attach the timer and plug them in. Presto! A grow unit. Put your seedlings under the light fixture

and set the timer for about 18 hours. Our units turn on at 6 am and off at midnight. If you are awake between those hours you do not even need the timer! Put your potted seeds under the lamp about 5 inches above the pots. As the plants grow you will want to raise the lights to accommodate your plant's height. Simply add more bricks. Another super-easy way to hang your lights is to use an old frame from a chair or coffee table. One of my favourite ways to build a grow unit is to source a bookcase or shelving unit. A metal shelving unit really keeps things clean and is useful for storage later.

The reason I suggest fluorescent fixtures is that they do not build up a lot of heat. After all, there is no sense in making a nice growing unit only to burn the house down!

When you buy fluorescent tubes for the fixture do not buy expensive grow lights. Plain old fluorescent tubes work just fine. Hope you have fun with this idea, *happy seeding!*



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