

How to Make Seed Tape

LaVonne Nowlin

I am a frugal shopper for seed. After going to a garden center to buy some seed, I noticed that the prices were higher than previous years. I also saw a package of manufactured seed tape for radishes, which were \$2.97. To say I was shocked was an understatement. I thought about this nonproductive trip to the garden center and began to do research on seed tape and came up with my own version. The supplies needed to accomplish this seed tape was Elmer's School glue, tweezers, a marker, a ruler, a pencil, and paper of my choice which was toilet paper, paper towel, and/or newspaper, and of course, the seeds needed. (I also felt the only seeds needed to be on seed tape were the small ones where waste would be at a minimum. I absolutely refuse to give my money away to the manufacturers and this seemed to be the solution by not wasting seeds unnecessarily.

First of all, I determined that every time I plant very small seeds such as radishes, carrots, turnips, onions from seed - I waste about 3/4th of them by planting them too close to each other and then when they come up - having to thin out over 1/2 or more. So, I took several biodegradable steps and here is what I did:

- (1) I cut paper towels, newspaper, or toilet paper 2 inches wide (never mind about the length because it can be cut to any length) and folded it in half.
- (2) I bought Elmer's School glue (which is water-soluble).
- (3) I took a ruler and measured in the center of the folded paper the length of how far apart these seeds should be planted and marked it with a marker.
- (4) Where I marked the location of each seed - I put a small amount of glue on the paper.
- (5) Then, I picked up the seed with my tweezers and laid it in the middle of the glue.

Note: The more I got into this, the easier I found how to transfer the seed to the glue - I used the sharp end of a pencil, dabbed it in the glue and it automatically picked up at least 1-2 seeds where I laid it in the glue. I surmised that not all seeds are viable so I didn't really waste any seed. Most of the time, I put at least two seeds in the glue. Depending on the length of tape you make, you leave almost 1/2 to 3/4 of the seed in the package for the next time you want to replant these vegetable seeds.

- (6) After placing the seed in the glue, I folded the paper over on the seed and glue to dry. It doesn't take it long to dry and can be cut at any length or lengthened for a longer row.
- (7) After folding the paper, I took my marker and annotated what kind of seed I was going to plant. Then when it dried, just roll it up until use.
- (8) Plant at the recommended depth for the seed and cover with soil and dampen with water. It is amazing what money this truly saves.

Note: If you are planting squash, use about 4-5 seeds and they can be transferred to hills when planting.

That is really all there is to seed tape. It is fun to do while watching TV at night, or during a storm, or rain - and it really saves money by not having to waste so many seeds.