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**Seed depth.** Now you may be thinking, “What do we need to measure seed depth exactly for? Don’t seeds just need some soil and water?”

That’s where you and even some farmers go wrong, underestimating seed depth. Different seeds require great amounts of care when put into the ground as growers need to consider, root depth, stem size and depth, flower height, optimal sunlight times, shade and weather conditions.

Ok, so what are these depths, are they universal? Is moisture a factor?

Yes. And no.

Seeding depth is varied between crops. For example

Peas can be planted, into moisture anywhere from 1 inch to 3 inches.

Cereals like wheat, oats and barley aren’t as deep but still should be planted into moisture at 1.5 to 2 inches.

Canola is a shallower crop, with small seeds which can wash or blow away, so planting depth and moisture is really important for the crop to germinate and grow well. It’s also a small range between .5 inches to 1 inch.

Some crops are less particular about their seeding moisture needs and they are:

Lentil – 1 inch to 3 inches

Soybean – 1.5 inches

Corn- 1.5 inches to 2 inches.

Seeding depth is important because the seeds grow two ways as they germinate – the roots go down and the shoot grows up. They need a good spot to get enough root to stay steady as they grow, with moisture to help them get nutrients from the soil, but also close enough to the surface so the little seedlings can emerge and grow into strong plants. Too shallow and they won’t be strong plants, too deep and they might not make it to the surface at all!

Seeding depth is checked during the time a farmer sets his planter or seed drills. Farmers will check their seed depth and placement of fertilizers during their time in the field, and when they change fields and crops. Each machine will have meters that place the seeds the correct distance apart, and the drill is set to put them in the right depth.

Your ruler is what farmers use to carefully check how well they have set their drill. If you see a farmer on their stomach in a field during seeding, they are probably checking their seed depth!

You can experiment with your seeds and seeding depth. Try seeding at the right depth for your seeds, and then too deep as well as too shallow. Make a note or take photos of how your plants grow depending on where they were seeded for depth. If you want to check on moisture plant three sets at the same depth but have one at optimal moisture, one too dry and one too wet. See how that changes your seed emergence and growth.

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