



# SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

## *Birch*

### Treating and growing on seed

**Need:** Seed, polythene freezer bags, vermiculite (available from Garden Centres), seed tray/rigipot, peat free loam based potting compost, sharp sand, liquid fertiliser. Optional: fine grit, watering tray.

#### 1. **Storage**

Lay seed on newspaper to dry in cool conditions . When paper-dry, store seed at 2° to 5° C (fridge) in freezer bag- tie loosely.

Allow seed to breathe by opening/shaking once every 2-3 weeks.

#### 2. **Stratification**

Begin process at end of January.

Steps :

##### 2.1 **Preparation**

Soak seed for 48 hours, to re-moisturise.

Mix vermiculite and compost with seed at ratio of 3 parts seed to one of compost, and place in polythene bag.

Add water until damp - not much required - use a beaker . Label seeds in bag and tie off top of bag.

Mark up bag with seed collection details : species, collection site, date.

##### 2.2 **Pretreatment**

Store in cold conditions (1° to 5° C ) for 4 weeks, or as long as seed takes to 'chit' (produce a root) - use fridge.

Once a week open bag : mix seeds allowing carbon dioxide to escape and oxygen in .

Re-moisten if necessary and remove any mouldy seed

#### 3. **Sowing**

Fill tray cells with compost to 1-2 cm from top of tray . Bang on table to firm.

Sow seed in seed tray/rigipot when root is about 1/2" long, using peat free loam based potting compost. Fill tray asap with chitted seed (keeps growth even).

Sow seeds in seed tray evenly or 2 or 3 in each cell of the rigipot.

Cover compost in cells with fine grit coarse sand if available.

#### 4. **Growing**

##### 4.1 **Positioning of tray**

Put trays of early seedlings on windowsill/in warm greenhouse to avoid winter cold/frosts; if available move into cold frame/greenhouse in April/ May, or else leave on windowsill.

Move trees outside in September to overwinter, avoiding excessive sunlight

Ensure slugs / snails / rodents, etc . cannot get at the seedlings.

Turn the tray regularly to avoid bending of tree stems (seedlings grow towards the light) .

#### 4.2 **Watering**

Water regularly- every 3-4 days in mid-summer . Water less regularly in winter, but enough to keep roots damp.

It is difficult to overwater in summer - if in doubt, be generous.

#### 4.3 **Feeding**

Mix in liquid fertiliser when watering, if necessary . Ask for assistance if unclear.

### 5. **Advice service and helpline**

Phone: 07751 365094

E-mail [advice@tominalis.co.uk](mailto:advice@tominalis.co.uk)