



SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

Crab Apple

Treating and growing on seed

Need: Fruits, cleaning equipment (see 2.1), polythene freezer bags, vermiculite (available from Garden Centres), growing tray/rigipots, peat free loam based potting compost, sharp sand, liquid fertilizer. Optional: fine grit, watering tray.

1. **Storage**

Store fruit in hessian sack, allowing them to breathe.

2. **Stratification**

In early November begin process.

Steps :

2.1 **Preparation**

Extract seeds from rotten fruit. Cut away flesh of firm fruit just above and below 'core'; extract seed with the tip of a knife. Seed is soft and easily damaged - treat with care ! Wash seed thoroughly to remove all flesh (which can contain inhibitors to germination). Pretreat seed in a medium. Mix moist vermiculite and compost with seed at a ratio of 3 parts seed to one of compost, and place in polythene freezer bag or use a suitable plastic container if rodents are a problem. Add water until damp - not much required – use a beaker or similar container. Label seed inside bag and tie off top of bag.

2.2 **Pretreatment**

2.2.1 Store in warm conditions (15° to 18° C max.) for 2 weeks - use warm room, in light or dark conditions.

Once a week open bag : mix seeds allowing carbon dioxide to escape and oxygen in. Re-moisten if necessary and remove any mouldy seeds.

2.2.2 Store in cold conditions (1° to 5° C) for 14 weeks or as long as seed takes to 'chit' (produce a root) - use fridge.

Continue weekly routine as in 2.2.1. At first signs of chitting, check bag regularly for root emergence.

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).

Do not sow seed with too long a shoot : Plant these in a rigipot that has deep cells.

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