



SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

Wild Service Tree

Treating and growing on seed

Need: Cleaned seed, Cleaning Equipment (see 2.1), 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

Store berries in hessian sack/bag, allowing them to breathe.

In early October crush berries firmly under your foot in bag to hasten rotting process of flesh.

2. Stratification

Start process in mid October.

Steps :

2.1 Preparation

Clean flesh off seed (by now flesh is easily removed)

Technique: place berries in bird feeder with 1/4" mesh and blast with high pressure hose, or sieve/rolling pin/food blender are good alternatives!

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 ratio of 3 parts seed to one part 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 seeds inside bag and tie off top of bag.

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

2.2 Pretreatment

2.2.1 Store in warm conditions (15 ° to 18 ° C max.) for 2-4 weeks - use warm room, in light or dark conditions.

Once a week open bag : shake seeds allowing carbon dioxide to escape and oxygen in. Re-moisten if necessary and remove any mouldy seeds. Clean flesh off seed (by now flesh is easily removed)

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Label seeds inside bag and tie off top of bag.

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

2.2.2 Store in cold conditions (1 ° to 5 ° C) for 16 weeks or as long as seed takes to 'chit'

(produce a root) - use fridge.

Continue weekly routine as in 2.1.1

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 growing tray 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 in a shallow seed tray. Sow seeds with long roots in a rigipot which 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.

Grow outside during the summer.

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