



SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

BIRCH

Treating and growing on seed

Need: Seed, polythene freezer bags, vermiculite [available from Garden Centres], seed tray/rigipot, peat free 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°-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 :

a] **Preparation**

Soak seed for 48 hours, to remoisturise.

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.

b] **Pretreatment**

Store in cold conditions [1°-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 seeds.

3. **SOWING**

Fill tray cells with compost to 1-2 cms. 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/John Innes sowing / 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**

a] 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].

b] 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.

c] Feeding

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

6. **ADVICE SERVICE AND HELPLINE**

Please telephone Colin Carpenter if you have any queries, on :
01525 716371 OR MOBILE 07751 356094