



# SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

## BLACKTHORN

### Treating and growing on seed

**Need:** Sloes, cleaning equipment [see 2.a], polythene freezer bags, vermiculite [available from Garden Centres], growing tray, peat free potting compost,, sharp sand, liquid fertiliser. Optional: fine grit, watering tray.

#### 1. STORAGE

Store berries in hessian sack, allowing them to breathe. **In early October** crush berries firmly under your foot in bag to hasten rotting process of flesh.

#### 2. STRATIFICATION

**As soon as possible in October** start stratification process.

Steps :

##### a] **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 of compost/vermiculite, 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.

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

##### b] **Pretreatment**

i] Store in warm conditions [15°-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.

- ii] Store in cold conditions [1° - 5° C] for 18 weeks **or** as long as seed takes to 'chit' [produce a root] - use fridge.  
Continue weekly routine as in i].  
At first signs of chitting, check bag regularly for root emergence.

### 3. **SOWING**

Fill seed tray or rigipot cells with compost to 1-2 cms. from top of tray. Bang on table to firm.

Sow seed in growing tray when root is about 1/2" long, using universal sowing / potting compost .

Fill tray asap with chitted seed [keeps growth even].

Do not sow seed with too long a shoot. Plant out seeds with long roots in the rigipot that has deep cells.

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 2-3 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