



SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

CRAB APPLE

Treating and growing on seed

Need: Fruits, cleaning equipment (see 2.a)], polythene freezer bags, vermiculite [available from Garden Centres], growing tray/rigipot, peat free potting compost, liquid fertiliser. Optional: fine grit, watering tray.

1. STORAGE

Store fruit in hessian sack, allowing them to breathe.

2. STRATIFICATION

In early November begin process.

Steps :

a] **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.

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

b] **Pretreatment**

i] Store in warm conditions [15° - 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.

- ii] Store in cold conditions [1°-5° C] for 14 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 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 sowing / potting compost . Fill tray asap with chitted seed [keeps growth even].

Do not sow seed with too long a shoot : Plant these 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 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