



# SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

## ENGLISH OAK

### Treating and growing on seed

**Need:** Acorns, polythene freezer bags, deep seed tray/rigipot, peat free potting/seed compost, sharp sand, liquid fertiliser. Optional: watering tray.

#### 1. STORAGE/ PRETREATMENT

N.B. Acorns do not need a warm/ cold treatment like some seeds.

Remove damaged acorns, especially ones that have a weevil hole in them.

Mix acorns with peat free/John Innes potting compost or leaf litter gathered from the collection site- use equal parts of acorns to compost.

Put acorns/ compost in a plastic container, and puncture holes in it to allow oxygen in and water out. **Ensure that holes are small enough to stop mice from entering.**

Store container in light or dark conditions and at a cool temperature- e.g. garage or shed. If too warm, acorns will germinate too early.

Keep acorn mix damp, **not waterlogged.**

**Once a week open container :**

- Shake acorns/ compost allowing carbon dioxide to escape and oxygen in.
- Re-moisten if necessary and remove any mouldy acorns.
- Check for root emergence from acorns(chitting) ; at first signs of chitting, check container regularly for further chitting.

#### 3. SOWING

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

Sow acorns in deep seed tray or rigipots when root is about 1/2" long, using peat free sowing / potting compost .

Fill tray asap with chitted acorns [keeps growth even] and cover with sharp sand.

Keep well watered and protect from mice and squirrels.

#### 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 'harden off'/ overwinter, avoiding excessive sunlight.

Ensure slugs / snails / rodents, etc. cannot get at the seedlings by covering with a cage of fine mesh.

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. **TREE BABYSITTING SERVICE/HELPLINE**

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