



Processing your seeds

So you've collected your seeds... but now what? Different types of seeds require different processes and storage. Take a look at our handy guide, before you get started!

General tips

- Take a tub or a paper bag, but avoid plastic bags to stop seeds becoming too moist.
- Remember to label each bag clearly with the type of seed inside and record them using your seed gathering record.
- Take care not to damage the seeds during collection and processing.



Nuts

- Some nuts have a hard or spiky outer shell, like walnut, horse chestnut, and sweet chestnut. Carefully remove the shell without damaging the nut inside (or your fingers!).
- Other nuts, like oak, beech, and hazel, have a hard casing that doesn't need removal.
- Test all the nuts using the 'float test.' If they sink in a bowl of water, then you can plant a few in a pot with compost. If they float, they have failed to develop properly and so you can discard them.
- Protect the nuts from hungry mice or voles by covering your pots and hopefully your seeds will germinate in the spring.



Winged seeds

- Collect winged seeds when they are slightly green.
- Lay them out on newspaper and turn every two days until they are dry.
- Put several seeds in a pot with a mix of slightly damp compost and sand.
- Leave the seeds outside over winter where the cold will help with successful germination.
- Don't forget to protect your seeds from hungry rodents with netting, stones or bricks.
- In the spring, select the germinating seeds and plant them, with their wings, in their very own pot.



Useful vocab

Processing - sorting and preparing seeds before planting or stratifying.



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Cones

- Collect brown (ripe) cones which are still tightly closed and let them dry in a paper bag.
- When the cones are dry and begin to open, shake the bag to release the seeds from the cones. They are now ready for planting.
- Spread a layer of seeds over the surface of compost in a pot and cover with a thin layer of sand.
- Leave the seeds outside over winter where the cold will help with successful germination.
- Don't forget to protect your seeds from hungry rodents with netting, stones or bricks.
- In the spring, select the germinating seeds and plant them in their very own pot.



Fleshy fruits

- Fleshy fruits need some processing: Place them in water and gently squash to remove the seed from the flesh.
- For rowan and mulberry, squash the berries in a bowl of water to release the seeds.
- For apples and pears, score them with a knife, break them in half, and remove the pips.
- For hawthorn, squeeze the berry gently between your fingers and collect the one or two seeds within.
- Rinse the seeds to remove any remaining flesh and reduce the chance of pests and diseases.
- Put the seeds in a pot with a mix of slightly damp compost and sand.
- Leave the seeds outside over winter for successful germination.
- Protect from hungry mice or voles by covering your pots with some wire netting held down with a stone or brick.

