



Germinating Seed of Local Rainforest Plants

There is increasing interest in our area in propagating seed of local trees, either for growing on our own properties, or for exchange with others with similar interests. When collecting seed for propagation, there are several factors to bear in mind - it should be fully ripe and not insect-damaged, it should be collected from several plants and not just one (to avoid inbreeding effects) and it should be correctly identified (collect and press a

specimen with leaves and fruit between sheets of newspaper; if you don't know somebody who can identify it for you, give the specimen to Bryan Hacker (phone 3374 1468), and he will arrange for identification. Of course, it is also important that you receive permission from the landowner to collect seed on his/her land.

Different species have different requirements for seed treatment, if they are to germinate satisfactorily, and even with optimal treatments, seed of some species takes several months or even longer to germinate. The Department of Natural Resources (1998) has put together a list of recommended seed treatments for a range of species together with germination periods and the accompanying table lists those native to our area. Seed treatments included in the article are:

A – sow seed directly

B – pour cold water over seeds in a container and soak for 24 hours

C – pour cold water over seeds in a container and soak for 48 hours

D – pour just-boiled water over seeds in a container and soak for 24 hours

E – pour just-boiled water over seeds in a container and soak for 48 hours

F – scarify seed before sowing

A further reference which includes germination requirements is *Fragments of Green*, by Janet Hauser and Jan Blok. Information from this source (including 'F' above, has been added to the table below. Information from other sources is also included.

Generally it is advisable to remove any flesh from the seed. Then, having treated the seed, if recommended, it should be scattered, not too densely, on a bed of a free-draining potting mix in a polystyrene box or other free-draining container (where you only have a few seeds, a flower pot could be used, or seeds could be sown individually in small pots). The potting medium should be free of weed seeds. The seed should then be covered with a layer of the potting mix; where the seed is small, it should not be buried too deeply (no more than about five times the diameter of the seed). After sowing, the seeds should be kept continuously moist (but not water-logged). It is sometimes desirable to cover the box with wire mesh or netting to keep out rats or cane toads.

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Seed Treatment and Germination Periods

<i>Species</i>	<i>Common name</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Germination period</i>
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<i>Acacia</i> spp.	wattles	D	5-10 days
<i>Acronychia</i> spp.	acronychia	C	
<i>Alchornea ilicifolia</i>	native holly	A (fresh)	
<i>Alectryon</i> spp.	alectryons	A (fresh)	
<i>Allocasuarina</i> spp.	she-oaks	A	2-3 weeks
<i>Alphitonia excels</i>	red ash	A (fresh)	Difficult
<i>Alpinia caerulea</i>	native ginger	A	
<i>Araucaria cunninghamii</i>	hoop pine	A	6-12 weeks
<i>Argyrodendron trifoliolatum</i>	white booyong	A (fresh)	3-4 weeks
<i>Arytera distylis</i>	twin-leaf coogera	A (fresh)	
<i>Arytera divaricata</i>	coogara	B	
<i>Arytera foveolata</i>	pitted coogara	B	
<i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i>	grey myrtle	A (fresh)	
<i>Baloghia inophylla</i>	scrub bloodwood	A (fresh)	
<i>Beilschmiedia</i> spp.	walnuts	A (fresh)	
<i>Bouchardatia neurococca</i>	union nut	A (fresh)	erratic
<i>Brachychiton discolor</i>	lacebark	D	1-3 weeks
<i>Breynia oblongifolia</i>	breynia	A (fresh)	
<i>Callicarpa pedunculata</i>	velvet leaf	A (fresh)	
<i>Capparis arborea</i>	native pomegranate	A (fresh)	
<i>Carissa ovata</i>	carissa	A (fresh)	
<i>Castanospermum australe</i>	black bean	A (fresh)	3-12 weeks
<i>Casuarina</i> spp.	she-oaks	A	2-3 weeks
<i>Citrus australis</i>	native lime	A (fresh)	
<i>Commersonia bartramia</i>	brown kurrajong	D	2-6 weeks
<i>Cordyline</i> spp.	cordylines	B	1-3 weeks
<i>Croton insularis</i>	silver croton	A (fresh)	
<i>Croton stigmatus</i>	white croton	A (fresh)	
<i>Cryptocarya bidwillii</i>	yellow laurel	A (fresh)	
<i>Cryptocarya laevigata</i>	glossy laurel	A (fresh)	
<i>Cryptocarya microneura</i>	murrogun	A (fresh)	
<i>Cryptocarya obovata</i>	pepperberry	A (fresh)	
<i>Cryptocarya triplinervis</i>	three-veined cryptocarya	A (fresh)	

<i>Cupaniopsis parvifolia</i>	<i>small-leaved tuckeroo</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Denhamia</i> spp.	<i>denhamia</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Diospyros fasciculosa</i>	<i>grey ebony</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Diploglottis australis</i>	<i>native tamarind</i>	A (fresh)	2-4 weeks
<i>Dysoxylum</i> spp.	<i>mahoganies/rosewoods</i>	A (fresh)	2-6 weeks
<i>Ellatostachys xylocarpa</i>	<i>white tamarind</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Ehretia acuminata</i>	<i>koda tree</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Elaeodendron australe</i>	<i>red olive plum</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Endiandra muelleri</i>	<i>green-leaved rose walnut</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Endiandra pubens</i>	<i>hairy walnut</i>	C	Germinate slowly
<i>Erythrina vespertilio</i>	<i>bat's wing coral tree</i>	F	
<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp.	<i>eucalypts</i>	A	1-3 weeks
<i>Eupomatia bennettii</i>	<i>small bolwarra</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Eupomatia laurina</i>	<i>bolwarra</i>	A	
<i>Exocarpus latifolius</i>	<i>broad-leaved cherry</i>		Difficult
<i>Ficus</i> spp.	<i>figs</i>	A	2-6 weeks
<i>Flindersia collina</i>	<i>leopard ash</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Gmelina leichhardtii</i>	<i>white beech</i>	A (fresh)	12-24 months
<i>Harpullia</i> spp.	<i>tulipwoods</i>	B	2-6 weeks
<i>Hodgkinsonia ovatiflora</i>	<i>hodgkinsonia</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Homalanthus nutans</i>	<i>native bleeding heart</i>	A	
<i>Hovea longipes</i>	<i>brush hovea</i>	D	
<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>	<i>native frangipani</i>	A	4-12 weeks
<i>Litsea reticulate</i>	<i>bolly gum</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Lomandra</i> spp.	<i>Mat rushes</i>	A (fresh)	4-6 weeks
<i>Lophostemon</i> spp.	<i>brush and swamp box</i>	A	1-2 weeks
<i>Mallotus claoxyloides</i>	<i>green kamala</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Mallotus</i> spp.	<i>kamalas</i>	A	2-6 weeks
<i>Maytenus</i> spp.	<i>orange bush/orange bark</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Melaleuca</i> spp.	<i>bottlebrushes/tea trees</i>	A	1-3 weeks
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	<i>white cedar</i>	A	2-4 months
<i>Melicope micrococca</i>	<i>white doughwood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Mischocarpus pyriformis</i>	<i>yellow pear-fruit</i>	A (fresh)	

<i>Myrsine</i> spp.	<i>muttonwoods</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Neolitsea dealbata</i>	<i>white bolly gum</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Niemeyera antiloga</i>	<i>brown pearwood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Olea paniculata</i>	<i>native olive</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Owena venosa</i>	<i>rose almond</i>		v. difficult
<i>Pandorea jasminoides</i>	<i>wonga vine</i>	A	1-3 weeks
<i>Pararchidendron pruinosum</i>	<i>snow-wood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Pentaceras australis</i>	<i>penta ash</i>		difficult
<i>Pilidiostigma glabra</i>	<i>plum myrtle</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Pittosporum</i> spp.	<i>pittosporum</i>	E	2-6 months
<i>Podocarpus elatus</i>	<i>brown pine</i>	C	1-3 months
<i>Polyscias elegans</i>	<i>celery wood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Pouteria australis.</i>	<i>black apple</i>	C	
<i>Pouteria cotinifolia.</i>	<i>small-leaved coondoo</i>	C	
<i>Pouteria myrsinifolia.</i>	<i>blunt-leaved coondoo</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Pouteria pohlmaniana.</i>	<i>yellow boxwood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Pseudweinmannia lachnocarpa</i>	<i>rose marara</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Rhodamnia argentea</i>	<i>malletwood</i>	C	
<i>Rhodosphaera rhodanthema</i>	<i>deep yellowwood</i>	C	2-3 months
<i>Sambucus australasica</i>	<i>native elderberry</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Scolopia braunii</i>	<i>flintwood</i>		
<i>Siphonodon austral</i>	<i>vorywood</i>	A (fresh)	Slow
<i>Stenocarpus sinuatus</i>	<i>wheel of fire</i>	A	4-6 weeks
<i>Sterculia quadrifida</i>	<i>peanut tree</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Streblus brunonianus</i>	<i>whalebone tree</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Symplocos harroldii</i>	<i>hairy hazelwood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Synoum glandulosum</i>	<i>scentless rosewood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Syzygium</i> spp.	<i>lillypillys</i>	C	2-6 weeks
<i>Tabernaemontana pandacaqui</i>	<i>banana bush</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Toechima tenax</i>	<i>pitted-leaf steelwood</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Toona ciliata</i>	<i>red cedar</i>	A (fresh)	2-6 weeks
<i>Trema aspera</i>	<i>poison peach</i>	A (fresh)	
<i>Trochocarpa laurina</i>	<i>tree heath</i>		Slow

<i>Turraea pubescens</i>	<i>native witch-hazel</i>	<i>A (fresh)</i>	
<i>Vitex lignum-vitae</i>	<i>lignum-vitae</i>	<i>A (fresh)</i>	<i>Difficult</i>
<i>Wilkiea macrophylla</i>	<i>large-leaved wilkiea</i>	<i>A (fresh)</i>	

As shown in the table, it can be weeks or even months before the seedlings of some species can be expected to appear. When they are 5-10 cm tall, they can be carefully teased apart and individually planted in 5 cm tubes or small flower pots, to be grown to 30-50 cm height before planting out in the field.

Information compiled from various sources by Bryan Hacker, 2013