



SEED SOWING INSTRUCTIONS

Hornbeam

Treating and growing on seed

Need: Seed, polythene freezer bags, vermiculite (available from Garden Centres), seed tray/rigipot, peat free loam based potting compost, sharp sand, liquid fertiliser. Optional: fine grit, watering tray.

1. Storage

Lay seed on newspaper to dry in cool conditions. When paper-dry, store seed in hessian sack, allowing them to breathe.

2. Stratification

Start process at the beginning of October.

Steps :

2.1 Preparation

Soak seed over 7 day period, to remove chemical inhibitors to germination.

Alternate 24 hours in water/24 hours out, draining off water with a sieve. Use fresh water each time.

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 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.

2.2 Pretreatment

2.2.1 Store in warm conditions (15° to 18° C max) for 4 weeks - use cool airing cupboard/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.

2.2.2 Store in cold conditions (1° to 5° C) for 16 weeks or as long as seed takes to 'chit' (produce a root) - use fridge. Continue weekly routine as in 2.2.1. At first signs of chitting, check bag regularly for root emergence.

3. Sowing

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

Sow seed in growing tray when root is about 1/2" long, peat free loam based potting compost. Fill tray asap with chitted seed (keeps growth even).

Do not sow seed with too long a shoot in a shallow seed tray. Sow seeds with long roots in a rigipot which has deep cells.

Cover compost in cells with fine grit / coarse sand if available.

4. Growing

4.1 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. Grow outside during the summer.

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).

4.2 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.

4.3 Feeding

Mix in liquid fertiliser when watering, if necessary. Ask for assistance if unclear.

5. Advice service and helpline

Phone: 07751 365094

E-mail advice@tominalis.co.uk