

Hello Trees Resource Sheet



General Information

How to Grow Trees from Seed



What you really need is the Tree Council book '[Trees and how to grow them](#)' by Margaret Lipscombe and Jon Stokes
However, if you really cannot buy it, here is a summary of what it tells us.

The Tree Council has a special 'Seed Gathering Season' from late September to late October. There are fun events to join. See if there is [one near you](#).



Or go wild and do your own seed gathering.
Why? Because it gets us out into the fresh air.
Because it gets us looking at seeds.
Because it gets us thinking about trees.



And you will be DOING SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

The 1.5 billion trees that the UK must plant to be carbon neutral by 2050 equates to a do-able **1.5 trees per person per year** – or 3 trees between 2 of you!

WHAT TO GROW



Trees are being attacked by imported pests and diseases.

The seeds you gather will be from trees that are flourishing in your area:



If a tree is flourishing, it is coping with pests and diseases.

If your tree is flourishing, local wildlife is flourishing alongside it.

As the Tree Council says, 'Growing seeds from healthy UK trees is probably one of the best ways of taking out insurance that there will be strong saplings to plant where gaps appear.' Trees that are flourishing in your area and from which you can collect seeds.

Trees that will be given a place to grow. Ask local gardeners, Woodland Trust, the Council ...

WHAT YOU NEED



Paper bags and a pencil or pen.

Wear the right clothes for the weather.

Wear trousers to protect your legs from nettles.

A place to go where there are trees or hedges

- away from busy roads

- where no one will mind if you gather a few seeds



Keep your fingers away from your eyes and your mouth until you have washed your hands: some of the most attractive looking berries are poisonous.

COLLECT YOUR SEEDS

On your packet, note

- The size of the tree: big, medium or small – or [estimate its height](#).
- The type of tree - or draw the shape of the leaf to help you identify it later.
- Where the tree is growing.
- Why you chose to plant its seeds.

PREPARE YOUR SEEDS

Pods – break open the pod and strip out the seeds

Winged seeds – if in pairs, split in half

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Nuts – put them in a bowl of water and discard the ones that float.

Fleshy fruits – cut the fruit in half to reveal the fruit or, if the fruit is very small, mash them in water, put the resulting pulp in a sieve and reveal the seed by rinsing away the flesh under running water.

Cones – put them in a paper bag and leave until the cone scales have opened, then shake the cone over the bag so that the seeds fall from under the scales.

KEEP YOUR SEEDS COOL UNTIL SPRING

This is called 'stratification': trying to simulate winter because the seed is programmed to germinate in Spring is when the temperature rises after weeks of cold.

Small seeds – soak them in cold water for 24 hours, put them into a plastic bag clearly labelled, put the bag of seeds at the bottom of a fridge for at least two months.

Or

Sow the seeds in pots (see SOW YOUR SEED below), cover with netting to deter rodents and leave outdoors away from direct sun and sheltered from strong wind.

Large quantities of seeds, or bigger ones – stratify them outdoors. Mix the seeds with moist compost, put the mixture in a closed vessel, leave outside all winter. Sow the seeds in Spring.

SOW YOUR SEEDS

In containers – waxed-card juice cartons are ideal because they biodegrade so you can plant the whole thing rather than having to disturb the roots, but sawn-off plastic milk bottles with a hole in the bottom, large yogurt pots with a hole in the bottom or a used plant pot are OK. Put stones at the bottom to help drainage, cover with soil or compost.

Larger seeds – sow individually. Make a dent in the soil deep enough for the seed to be covered by its own depth of soil, drop in the seed, cover with soil. Cover the pot with wire netting or the netting you buy citrus in from a supermarket.

Small seeds – sprinkle them a pinch at a time over the soil, scatter soil to cover them.

Put the containers outside away from direct sun and sheltered from strong wind.

Let rain water the seeds, but don't let the soil get too wet or dry.

Directly into the ground – prepare the ground as you would for any seeds: dig over and remove all weeds. If the soil is heavy, dig in coarse grit or sharp sand to help with drainage. Plant large seeds individually. Sow small seeds along a shallow furrow.

Fence the area with wire netting to deter rodents. Keep the soil moist but not wet.

WHEN THE SEEDS GERMINATE

Small seeds - pull out smaller weaker seedlings and leave one good one.

Larger seeds – remove the netting

WHEN THE ROOTS FILL THE POT OR THE SEEDLINGS LARGE ENOUGH TO HANDLE

Find the right place for your tree. Think decades: space, light, soil, water.

Put a tree guard round the stem to protect it from rabbits.

Plan for your tree to be cared for in coming years.

For free-to-download useful tips, see the Tree Council [Tree Care Campaign](#).



YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING IMPORTANT