

Acacia species

Growing Acacias from seeds is the easiest and quickest method of producing plants, although it can be done from cuttings also.

It is recommended that all equipment and soil to be used (if not purchased commercially) be sterilised to prevent any possible contamination from soil pathogens or production of weeds.

Propagation

Simple equipment can be used to start growing from either seeds or cuttings. Clean plastic pots filled with the appropriate mix (see below) and covered with a plastic bag supported by curved wire. A tie or rubber band may be used to secure the plastic bag in place.

Small plastic propagation units are available from commercial sources or may be made.

Glass or 'Poly' houses also are commercially available or may be built.

An automatic misting system could be installed to maintain humidity. 'Bottom heat' too may be used to create warm conditions year-round giving faster production of roots or germination of seeds. This is basically a protected heated pad which is placed in a frame or box covered by sand or gravel into which the pots are embedded. These 'houses' need to be covered in summer with shade cloth or painted with special white paint to control the heat.

Seed mix - 3 parts washed river sand (not beach) and 1 part well composted pine bark, peat moss or vermiculite.

Acacia seeds need to be treated before sowing to enable moisture to penetrate the normally hard seed coat. One method is to place seeds in a container, cover with near boiling water and soak overnight. Seeds which swell are ready for sowing, the remainder may be re-treated. Another method is to scarify the seed. This is done by rubbing the seeds between two pieces of sandpaper thus thinning the seed coat to allow water to penetrate.

Potting On

When seeds have sprouted and the seedlings are large enough to handle (about 2-3 cm tall) they should be transplanted into prepared clean potting mix in 7 cm diameter plastic pots

Planting Out and Maintenance

To plant out in the garden select a well-drained spot, clear away any weeds or grass and dig a hole about twice the depth of the pot. Fill the hole twice with water allowing the water to drain away each time. To release the plant from the pot, hold a hand over the top and around the plant, knock the top of the pot on a firm surface and ease the plant out, tease out the roots, straighten or trim any of those that are curled. Place the plant in the prepared hole planting to the previous soil level, hold the plant upright while the hole is filled with soil. Firm around the plant and water in. Continue to water about once a week until the new plant is established, especially if conditions are dry.

The garden area could be mulched with pine bark or other available material to help prevent drying out but the mulch needs to be kept away from the plant stem to avoid the possible development of stem rot.

Pruning is advisable each year to maintain a bushy healthy shrub and is best undertaken after flowering.

