

Tacca propagation

Soak the seeds 24 hours in warm/hot water (hot enough that you can put your hand in). Use a thermos bottle to keep the water hot during this time.

Sow in trays, pots, etc. using a good seed starting mix in a propagator or warm place to maintain optimum temperature of 23°C+. It is essential that the soil temperature is high and kept steady. Use regular seed flats and clear plastic domes. Place the flats on a propagation (heat) mat for additional bottom heat.

Sow about 2mm deep in good seed starting mix and seal the container using a polythene bag, cover with plastic wrap or use a clear dome to keep moisture in. Do not use regular potting soil – it is too heavy and does not allow the seeds to breathe or water to drain properly. Heavy soil can also cause the seed to damp off (rot).

Sprinkle a little bit of sphagnum moss on top to help retain moisture on the seed and mist them daily with warm to room temperature water. Bottom water can also be added to help promote good root structures, but don't drown them!

Germination can take from 1-9 months so be patient. Don't toss out your seed beds thinking they won't germinate!

Care of Seedlings

Transplant seedlings when they are large enough to handle into 75mm pots using a good free draining compost with 10% added grit (sand). "Washed" Sand can be purchased at any home improvement store - be SURE it's washed or the salts will damage your plant. Do not use beach sand.

During the growing season (late Spring to late Summer) the plants need to be watered very regularly and the compost must be well drained.

For fertiliser use Miracle Grow mixed ½ teaspoon to 1 litre of water.

Pot as required into larger pots, eventually to 20cm pots. Give very little water through the winter and provide a temperature of 17°C.

Summer temperature should be 20°C+. Re-pot in autumn if needed and keep shaded from sun. As with any tropical, give the occasional mist spray through the Summer.

Tacca's are known for damping off. Remember to use a good seed starting mix that has been sterilised by pouring boiling water over the medium prior to use.

If it still appears that your tiny seedling is failing, sift a small amount of good potting mix around the tiny stem for support, being very careful not to damage the stem!

Continue with bottom heat and a covered dome until they have at least their second set of leaves.

New leaves will appear curled and with a spinach texture. This is normal. A good idea is to put the plant in your bathroom, turn on the hot shower and let the room steam up. Close the door and leave the light on overnight. This will perk up a Tacca quicker than anything. They love the moisture and heat! Tacca's are tropicals! They love the heat and moisture but they can be grown indoors in colder climates. They will require additional care to keep them warm and moist.

As soon as new growth begins in the spring, remove the old, loose soil from their roots and then replot in a mixture of peat moss and sand. The pots need good drainage. While they are growing vigorously in the summer an abundance of water is applied, but throughout the winter, less water should be given. Established plants that have filled their pots up with roots will benefit from regular applications of dilute liquid fertiliser. The minimum winter temperature of the greenhouse should be 15°C - from Spring through Autumn (the time that they're actively growing), the minimum temperature that should be maintained is about 20°C.

