



Biodiversity and supporting nature: How to grow a Hawthorn tree

Picking

The berries should be picked from the beginning of October onwards. You can collect bunches directly from the tree by gripping the branch below and pulling the berries away. This way, no damage is caused to the parts of the tree that will continue to grow.

Extraction and storage

Berries can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks.

When you are ready to extract the seeds, place the berries in a bucket and use a wooden pole to squash or mash the berries to a pulp. Add plenty of water, using a bucket or hose, to help the seed separate from the flesh. Pour through a sieve and repeat 2-3 times until the water is clear and not frothy. Then pour off the water and floating seeds and flesh, leaving the clean seeds at the bottom of the bucket.

Pre-treatment

Combine equal amounts of horticultural sand and leafmould or peat-free compost and mix together with the extracted seeds. For each handful of seeds add 2-3 handfuls of mixture. Put a layer of stones in the bottom of a pot and cover the stones with sand, then the seed/sand mixture, and finally 2-3cm of sand. Leave to stand in a shady spot outdoors.



Leave the pot outside for eighteen months. You will need to be very patient but don't forget to keep checking. Water the pot if it shows signs of drying out and protect it from birds and mice.

Sowing

Look for signs of germination in early February of the second year after planting (eg February 2023 if seeds collected October 2021). If about 10% are showing signs, they are ready to sow. Sow three seeds in a 1-litre pot and cover with 5-10mm of compost or grit. Firm the seeds.

Watering

Water the seedlings regularly to keep the soil moist.

Growing

Hawthorn grows quickly but don't forget to remove the weaker seedlings to help the strongest. Mildew can be a problem. Make sure you treat it quickly with a fungicide, preferably organic.

Planting

When your Hawthorn is tall enough, get in touch with us about replanting by the waterways, for everyone to enjoy.

REMEMBER

It's important to plant native species. Before deciding what type of tree, look around your local area to see what grows well to give you a clue as to what would be best to plant. And when collecting seed, only collect what you need and only from the local area.