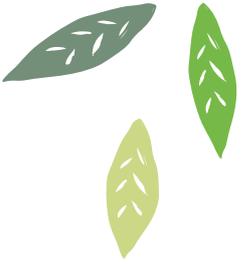


Manchester
City of Trees

GROWING MORE TREES
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

Welcome to the
wonderful world
of seed sowing
and growing.



Autumn is the perfect time of year to collect and sow your seeds.

Over spring and summer, trees produce flowers. These flowers are fertilised and, by autumn, have produced seeds. These seeds then fall to the ground ready to grow into new trees.

Tree seeds can be found almost everywhere and heading out to collect and identify them is all part of the fun!

Some seeds need more preparation before sowing than others, so be sure to check this guide first.

There are many different types of seed and they can be divided into four groups:

Nuts



Winged seeds



Cones and fruiting catkins



Fleshy fruit



Some top tips for seed sowing and growing:



- **Seeds come in all shapes and sizes** and there isn't a 'one size fits all' guide to looking after them. We hope our basic guide to planting seeds is helpful, however we recommend that you visit The Conservation Volunteer's website for a more detailed guide to sowing specific seeds: treegrowing.tcv.org.uk
- **Be patient** – it's important to remember that not all of the seeds you sow will be healthy enough to grow. Even if you follow all of these steps perfectly, some seeds are naturally empty or, 'dead' while some may just need extra time to germinate. Make sure to sow as many as you can to increase your chances of growing a healthy tree

⚠ **Ash dieback** is a serious disease and is now present across most of Greater Manchester. There is a national embargo on moving ash trees and seed and as such it is best not to sow ash seeds but to choose a different species to grow



- **Place your pot or tray** with your seeds in kits outside. Your seeds will need protection from harsh weather, so a shady spot next to a wall is ideal
- **Don't water your seeds too much** as they'll become waterlogged and make sure they don't dry out either
- **You should see leaves sprouting** the summer after sowing as your seeds turn into tree seedlings.
- **Keep your seedlings watered** and watch as they continue to grow.



Nuts

Examples:



● Beech nuts



● Acorns (oak)



● Conkers
(horse chestnut)

Many woodland animals love to eat this type of seed.

Squirrels often bury nuts so that they can come back and eat them in winter when food is hard to find. They often forget where they hid them and these forgotten seeds grow into trees.

You can simply pick nuts up from where they have fallen on the ground.

A good way of telling healthy nuts from bad nuts is to place them in a bowl filled with water. The healthy seeds will fall to the bottom and the unhealthy seeds will float to the surface.

To sow, insert a nut about 3cm deep into the compost of a small pot. Cover with compost, firm gently and water until moist.

Winged seeds

Winged seeds can be quite tricky to grow as they need to be stratified before any roots and shoots will appear.

You can do this by separating the seeds from each other, then mixing equal amounts of compost and sand (handful of each) with the seeds and placing this mixture into a plant pot placed outside over winter.

This mixture of compost, sand and seeds should be kept moist but not soaking wet. This breaks down the protective coat surrounding the seed and helps it to grow.

Examples:



● Field maple



● Sycamore

In spring, the mixture can be emptied out and any seeds showing small roots or shoots can be sowed into another pot.

Cover each rooting seed with about 1cm of compost, firm gently and water until moist.

Any seeds that haven't germinated may need another winter to grow, so return the mixture to the container and wait until the following spring.



Cones and fruiting catkins

Examples:



● Alder cones



● Birch fruiting catkins



● Pine cones

These very small seeds can be collected by picking the whole cone or fruiting catkin from the tree.

Ripe seeds will fall easily from the cone or catkin, if not, you can leave them in a bag at room temperature to ripen and then collect the seeds.

To sow, take a tiny pinch and sprinkle across the top of the compost in a small pot or tray, then cover with a thin layer of sand (1-2mm) and water until moist.

Fleshy fruit

Examples:



● Holly (red berries)



● Hawthorn (red berries)



● Elderberry (black berries)

Remove the tiny seeds from the fleshy part of the fruit and wash them thoroughly. This can be done in a mixing bowl along with enough water to cover the fruit – you can use a potato masher to do this. All the healthy seeds will sink to the bottom. If the flesh is really tough, soak the berries for a day or two in water first.

Fleshy fruit seeds need to be stratified first to produce roots and shoots, like winged seeds. You can do this by separating the seeds from each other, then mixing equal amounts of compost and sand (handful of each) with the seeds and placing this mixture into a plant pot placed outside over winter.

This mixture of compost, sand and seeds should be kept moist but not soaking wet. This breaks down the protective coat surrounding the seed and helps it to grow.

In spring, the mixture can be emptied out and any seeds showing small roots or shoots can be put into a pot or tray.

Cover each rooting seed with about 1cm of compost and water until moist. Any seeds that haven't germinated may need another winter to grow, so return the mixture to the container and wait until the following spring.



Don't forget to label your seeds!



Planting your trees

- You can plant your tree seedlings into bigger plant pots as they grow – the roots may start coming out of the bottom of your pot.
- After a few years they'll need planting out into the ground in their final positions so that they can thrive and transform into mature trees. This is usually done between November and March when the trees are dormant and not actively growing.
- There are plenty of places to plant your tree – a local park, community tree nursery or even your own garden!
- You'll need to get the landowner's permission and make sure there's enough space for your tree, because it will get a LOT bigger!
- If you're not sure about where or how to plant your trees then come along to one of City of Trees' planting events. Visit www.cityoftrees.org.uk to find out more.

Share your seed gathering and growing adventures with us!

cityoftrees.org.uk



Tell us what you are doing!

