



Propagating Bamboo from Seed

Ethiopia | Madagascar | Tanzania

INTRODUCTION:

Bamboo is a monocarpic plant (i.e. it flowers and produces seeds only once in its lifetime) and the length of its flowering cycle ranges from 3-120 (depending on bamboo species) years. Additionally, bamboo seeds are short lived and they lose viability within one to two months, making it difficult to propagate Bamboo from seeds. Bamboo seeds vary in size and shape according to the species. Some seeds are grain-like, similar to rice, while others are like berry, mango, etc.

MEDIUM OF SOWING:

Seeds should be sown in a raised soil bed platform with good drainage to ensure there is no water logging. The propagation medium should be a mixture of soil, sand and compost (1:1:1), this ratio can be altered depending on the type of soil. Germinate the seeds in partial sunlight (shade net or under tree shades).

PRELIMINARY PREPARATION:

It is advisable to sow the seeds immediately after collection. Delay in seed sowing will result in rapid losing of viability. Before sowing, soak the seeds in normal water (overnight). Remove the floating seeds and only germinate the seeds which have settled at the bottom.

Step by step

Create a shallow trench or holes in the seedbed using twigs or fingers (~5 mm deep).



Place the seeds shallowly beneath the soil and ensure that they are not exposed.



Refill the trench with the displaced soil.



Step by step

It is important to keep the seed bed moist and therefore, daily watering is advised.



Seed germination starts after five to seven days and continues till 25 days. As soon as the seedlings attain the stage of having 4 to 6 leaves, plants can be transplanted.



The potting medium in poly bags should be a mixture of soil, sand and manure in 1:1:1. In case of sandy loam soil, potting medium can be soil and manure mixture (3:1)



Keep the potting medium filled in poly bags before removing seedlings from germination bed. Water them thoroughly to enable settling of soil medium.



Step by step

Make a hole using tree twigs or fingers. Gently place the underground portion of bamboo seedlings inside the holes. Press the surrounding soil with fingers. Size of poly bags should be 6 X 8 inches or bigger.



Keep the seedlings in partial shade (50 to 75 percent) or under trees or shade nets for one to two months before transferring to direct sunlight.



Daily watering and regular weeding is necessary to maintain the health of seedlings.



Nine month old seedlings are most suitable for planting in the field.





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