



# Sacramento Valley Chapter SacValley CNPS Nursery & Gardens

2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova 95670  
SacValleyCNPS.org/Nursery



## *Growing With* An introduction to seed propagation at home



Plant propagation by seed provides a simple and economical way of raising large numbers of native plants. You can use a raised cold frame on table as a nursery area for seed flats and pots. It is just as easy to care for a dozen pots as it is one, and you are sure to have some good success if you try growing a variety of species. If you don't need all the plants, they can be shared with others.

**Seed Collection:** Even when collecting in your own garden, try to collect no more than one-tenth of seeds from an area. After all, seeds are food for wildlife! Seeds should only be harvested from healthy plants showing no sign of disease or insect damage.

**Seed Cleaning:** Seed must generally be hand-screened, stripped, or mechanically cleaned to remove impurities such as excess chaff, stems, leaves, trash, dirt, and seeds of non-target species. After the seeds are dry, they should be placed in a labeled envelope with the species type and date of collection. The envelope needs to be stored in a cool dry area.

**Sowing Seeds/ Recommended Germination Media:** The majority of California Native species have no unusual requirements. A satisfactory general-purpose seedbed medium composed of equal parts of potting soil\*, builders' sand or river sand, and moist peat moss thoroughly mixed together should do the trick. Native seeds can be sown thickly (planted close together). Label with the name and sowing date. A general rule to sowing seeds is to cover a seed to a depth equal to one or two times its smallest diameter. \* We like Potting soil with natural plant food as fertilizer.

**Waiting for Germination:** Each native seed has its own timetable for germination. This is very different from cultivated plants such as vegetables and annual flowers who have been bred and selected for rapid germination. In wild plants, seed germination is often variable. Some seeds will germinate immediately while others germinate irregularly over a period of weeks, months or even years. This reproductive strategy is advantageous for a wild plant because offspring are dispersed over time, a better strategy for dealing with the climatic fluctuations.

Note: At SacValley CNPS Nursery, we have discovered that seeds are not always viable. So don't be discouraged if plants don't start. Try and try again!

**Much more information:**

[https://calscape.org/seed\\_propagation.php](https://calscape.org/seed_propagation.php) <https://wildseedproject.net/how-to-grow-natives-from-seed/>