

KATOOMBA NATIVE PLANT NURSERY FACT SHEET

WORKING IN THE NURSERY



Seasonal activities

Throughout spring and summer, the nursery is usually a hive of activity including planting seed, pricking out into tubes, and planting up.



Meeting demand for sought-after species of plants and developing a genetically diverse, locally provenanced seed bank requires planning and coordination that can span many years.

Cuttings can be collected year-round and are especially useful for wildplants that cannot easily be propagated from seed.

Due to the time demands and sensitivity of these wildplants, many nurseries do not attempt their propagation.

Winter is the best time to conduct cleaning and housekeeping functions, as well as planning for the busy activity of spring, including preparation of pots and plant labels.

It is also a good time to catch up on the record keeping and documentation procedures that may have been a much lower priority in spring and summer.

Monitoring signs of seasonal change such as the appearance of budding on wildplants will give an early indication that it will soon be warm enough to commence propagation of seed. Potting & seed raising mixes

The success or failure of propagating wildplants will depend to a large degree on the quality and suitability of the seed raising and potting mix.

One good mix for each function is preferable to varying the mix from species to species because it is easier to store one mix only and purchasing in bulk will help reduce costs.

Growing from seed

Records of all successes and failures are kept improving the success rate of any future propagation of a particular species.

Controlling contamination

Good housekeeping in the nursery is essential to reduce the chance of disease transmission amongst wildplants, which can result in extensive loss. All recycled seed trays, tubes and pots must be cleaned with disinfectant, as well as any utensils used for pricking out and re-potting.

Seed raising or potting mixes are not used more than once without sterilisation. If Wildplant Rescue Service does not have access to sterilisation facilities, it is cheaper and less risky to simply discard the used mixes. A mix is never re-used if plants have shown signs of disease.



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Seed cleaning, storage, and propagation

Before either storage or sowing, seeds need to be cleaned and prepared. The treatment of seed will depend on the species.

Seeds contained within fleshy fruits are dried and the outer covering removed. A fine sieve is used to remove the covering from most dried seed whereas Banksia seeds are placed in a warm oven or fire to open the capsules.

Volunteers help ensure that seeds remain moist once sown. When seeds germinate, they are 'pricked out' into tubes when the second sets of true leaves form.

To transplant, use a pointed stick, knife or equivalent to make a deep hole in the new container and carefully allow the roots to fall. Back fill, ensuring the roots remain in a downward position and soil level remains the same.