

The rare seeds we offer are not domesticated, hybridized, or genetically modified. You won't find them in your local garden center because they aren't engineered to accommodate humans. They're wild seeds that have evolved to thrive in a natural environment, not your backyard. Most will, but you'll need to find out what they expect, what climate is natural for them, and replicate it as best you can. Consider your climate and compare it to where the seed came from. If you live in the desert and the plant came from the tropics, it's going to need a support system. (and vice versa). Most rare seeds germinate slowly and won't pop up the first time you water. That's why they are rare.

*Seeds should be planted near the soil surface, no more than TWICE THEIR THICKNESS. Tiny seeds don't contain the energy to climb through dense soil. Some also need light to germinate. "Surface sow" means they should be on top of the soil, not under it. They still need to be kept moist, (clear plastic helps), but if you bury them, they'll sit there forever.

*Nearly all seeds contain GERMINATION INHIBITORS, chemicals or a hard shell to keep them from sprouting too soon. If all sprouted as soon as they hit the ground, they'd all grow in one place and die. Mother Nature had a plan.

*Any seed with a hard coat can be helped along if you SCARIFY them, nick or scratch away part of the surface so water can get in. Otherwise they'll sit in the ground till they've absorbed enough water to sprout. This could take weeks or months and you'll think your seeds failed. SOAK hard seeds and they'll sprout much sooner.

*Some seeds need to be chilled before they'll sprout. They are designed to withstand a period of cold before they'll germinate. Sow them outdoors in fall and they'll go through winter naturally, or STRATIFY them in your fridge (the vegetable compartment, not the freezer!) before planting.

*Some seeds need SPECIAL TREATMENT before they'll sprout, like a forest fire, or a trip through an animal's digestive tract. You can replicate these conditions with chemicals (smoke paper, orange juice), but you'll need to know ahead of time. Print out our description so you'll remember where the seed came from and what it needs.

*Most seeds aren't so fussy. They just need warmth, moisture, and decent soil with good DRAINAGE (so they don't sit in water and drown). They do not need Jiffy Pots or Miracle Gro.

*Fruit seeds from the tropical rainforest need to be planted promptly. They're designed to drop into rich, warm humus and sprout in moist tropical heat. Don't put them in a drawer. Put them in the dirt. We send some seeds wrapped in moist paper because they'll die if they dry out. This is a lot of work, but it's the only way you'll ever be able to grow those seeds.

*Seeds will germinate when the SOIL reaches 68 degrees or warmer! It's not the temperature of the room but the warmth of the soil that wakes seeds up and gets them ready to sprout.

We don't send germination instructions with every seed. Presumably you're an experienced gardener and know that desert seeds need sand and tropical seeds need the opposite. If you haven't grown something before, look it up. Your climate may be perfect or you may need a greenhouse to keep it alive. Google the botanical name plus GERMINATION, and read what other gardeners have to say. Cookie-cutter "just add water" instructions are misleading. Full sun means one thing in Maine and another in Texas. We're happy to answer questions, but these are uncommon seeds that often need special attention. Look them up. Then be patient and have fun!