

# How to grow your own kōwhai trees

## Preparing your seeds for germination

- Drag each seed lightly across the enclosed sandpaper about 6–7 times (hold the seed so the small dark depression is away from the sandpaper). This will scratch the surface enabling water to penetrate the seed and start the germination process. Take care not to scratch too deeply.
- Spring and summer are the best times to do this.

## Sowing seeds

- Fill the provided six-cell plastic punnet with potting mix – alternatively you could use a small yoghurt pottle or a seed-raising tray. Whatever container you use, ensure it has plenty of drainage holes in its base.
- Thoroughly water the potting mix and leave to drain
- For each cell make a hole in the mix to a depth of about 1 cm (a nail is good for this).
- Place one seed into each hole and fill hole with potting mix

## Waiting for germination

- Put punnet in warm place out of direct sunlight.
- Water *occasionally* to ensure the potting mix does not dry out
- Germination should be evident 2–4 weeks after sowing, depending on soil temperature and other factors.

## Care after germination

- Once seedlings appear keep them in full sun.
- *Do not over water.*
- Your new seedlings can stay in their punnet until they are about 8 cm tall and roots are beginning to come out the bottom of the pot.
- At this point it's time to move them on to a larger pot on their own. A good sized pot at this stage is about 10 cm x 10 cm.
- Extract your seedling from their cell (push from the bottom) taking care to avoid damage to the roots. Try and ensure soil remains attached to the root plug that you remove.
- Partially fill the new larger pot with potting mix, place the seedling centrally in the pot and fill the remaining space with potting mix until level with the base of the seedling. Water the pot.
- Your seedlings will be happy in a pot this size for the rest of their first year.

## Years 2–3

- You'll need to repot your plants into a larger pot (about 1.5 litre capacity) after their first year to ensure they have plenty of resources to get them to a size suitable for planting out in the wild. A suitable size for planting out might be reached after just two years but could take three years. Ensure some slow-release fertilizer is applied each spring.

## Things to watch out for:

- Protect your plants from slugs and snails (and rabbits too if they're likely to be a problem in your area)
- Be careful when using herbicides in the garden. Kowhai are particularly sensitive and easily damaged.

