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Appendix Y: Growing Your Own Oak Seedlings

How to Plant an Acorn

Step 1: Select an acorn. Discard any acorns that may be cracked or with holes in the shell. Place the acorn in water and let it soak for 24 hours. If it floats in the water, it will not grow and another acorn is required.



Bur Oaks produce large acorns that are easy to gather and plant in containers. Before planting, remove the caps and soak in water over night.

Step 2: Find a one or two-gallon container that has holes in the bottom for proper drainage (drill or poke holes if necessary). Fill the container with soil from the same location the tree will eventually be planted, leaving about 1-inch between the top of the soil and the rim of the container. The soil can be amended with a small amount of finished compost.



Fill a 1 to 2-gallon container with native soil and place the acorn on its side. Cover the acorn with 1 to 2-inches of soil.

Step 3: Plant the acorn in soil at a depth of one and a half times the diameter of the acorn. For example, a one-inch diameter acorn should be planted around one and a half inches deep.



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Step 4: Place the container outside where it receives only morning sun and it is shaded in the afternoon. Water often enough to prevent the soil from pulling away from the sides of the container. If you are in doubt, use a screwdriver or your finger to check the soil moisture. (*Gardeners prefer to let their fingers do the walking.*)



Place the container where it will receive direct sun from morning until noon, and water it as needed to keep the soil moist. The acorn will germinate in 4 to 6 weeks.

Step 5: Stand back and watch your acorn sprout into an oak. Continue to water and fertilize your new tree as needed. Let it grow in its container until fall.



These Bur Oak seedlings have grown all summer long, and are ready for fall planting in the landscape.

In October, plant the “oak from an acorn” in a sunny location with plenty of room to grow, and away from overhead utility lines. Dig the planting hole twice the width of the container to reduce conflicts with any nearby plants and to provide loose soil for new roots to develop. Do not plant too deep. The soil level in the container should match the soil level of the existing grade once planted. Planting tip: If you let the soil in the container dry slightly before planting, the root ball will slide out of the container easily, eliminating the need to cut the container.



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Add a ring of mulch to the outside of the planting hole to help retain rainfall and to aid in watering. A half-inch of native tree chip mulch or other type of mulch can be added to aid in water retention as well as reduce evaporation.

The newly planted tree will become fully established in about three years. Until that time, water and fertilize it as needed.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

[Grow Your Own Seedlings](#)