

# How to grow SANDALWOOD tree from SEED at Home

The demand for this royal tree has been significantly increasing, creating a dire need for large-scale production. It is important to understand the different stages of this process, which are flowering, fruiting, seed collection, storage, germination, and raising good seedlings. Understanding the different stages in the sandalwood production process is crucial, including flowering, fruiting, seed collection, storage, germination, and raising of quality seedlings. Sandalwood typically exhibits inflorescences with white, pink, and purple flowers. During fruiting, there are immature green fruits, partially mature red fruits, and fully ripened purple fruits ready for collection. To collect ripened fruits, simply shake the tree and handpick them. Collected fruits are washed and de-pulped to obtain the seeds, which are then dried in shade and stored in airtight bags for two months. Pre-germination treatment involves soaking the seeds in a solution of gibberellic acid for approximately 16 hours.

## Germination

For germination, a sand bed is utilized to ensure delicate root care. Seeds are spread over the sand bed, covered, and watered adequately. Proper hydration is crucial during this phase. The sand bed is protected with a thin polythene or iron mesh to prevent rodent attacks. After around 25 days, seeds germinate, and shoots develop to a two-leaf stage within a month. Transplanting seedlings into polythene bags should be done with utmost care to avoid damaging fragile roots. Fungicide-mixed water is used to reduce transplant shock and prevent infections. Seedlings are then transferred to polybags containing red soil, sand, and compost and kept in controlled conditions for about 10 days.

Since sandalwood is a partial root parasite, a host plant such as *Alton Nintara* or *Mimosa Pudica* is introduced during development. Seedlings are placed in a mist chamber for 15 days before being moved to a shade house for primary hardening, gradually exposed to partial sunlight. After two months, they are shifted to open sunlight for further hardening, receiving regular watering and necessary nutrition for healthy growth. Finally, after six to eight months, the robust and healthy seedlings are ready for field planting.