

## How to Stratify



To encourage germination, we need to copy Mother Nature and signal to some seeds that it's a good time to germinate.

Different types of seed need different treatments to help them germinate. Stratification is one of the most common treatments, and it involves providing your seed with cold, moist conditions.

One method I use to accomplish this, is to simply moisten the seed and store it in the fridge for a specified period of time.

**The most important thing to remember about stratification is: once you moisten your seed, you must keep it moist at all times.**

A germinated seed needs water to keep going, so if you let the seed dry out, you may kill it.

**So far, I have found the following method the easiest way for me to do that.**

You will need: a small re-sealable bag, a coffee filter, a permanent marker, and a fridge

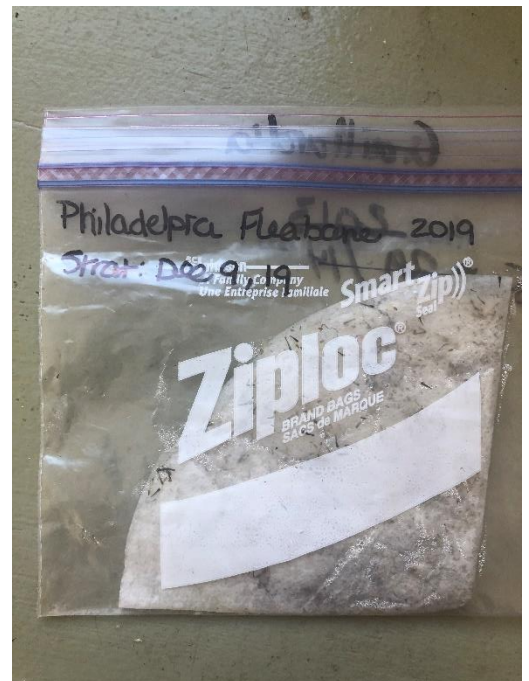
1) Find out how long you should stratify your seed for and how long it takes to germinate. **Label your bag with the start and finish date of stratification**, so you will know when to take it out of the fridge.

If you do not know your seeds' best stratification time, 6 weeks is a good average time to try. If you are running late on seeding, a 2 week period will help increase germination of most species.

2) **Wet the coffee filter in water, squeeze out the excess moisture**, it should be damp (not soggy).

3) Open up the coffee filter and lay it out flat. **Arrange the seed in a single layer on one half of the coffee filter**. Fold it in half and in half again. Slip it inside the re-sealable bag and close the bag (with a bit of air in it because seeds need oxygen too!)

4) **Place the sealed bag in the refrigerator** (not freezer) **and monitor weekly**, or as needed. Do not allow the coffee filter to completely dry out or stay soggy enough to rot



the seed. Gently spritz the coffee filter to re-moisten if condensation does not appear on the inside of the bag.

5) Once seed has completed the recommended stratification period, or if excessive early sprouting occurs, **plant immediately in pre-moistened seed starting trays or outdoors**, if threat of below freezing temps are past (do not let seed dry out while going from fridge to soil)



Other stratification methods involve placing seed in moistened sand and then in the fridge or other cold storage. I do not have enough cold storage for this, so for now I prefer the coffee filter method.

**Find our list of common native plant, vegetable and herb seeds and their recommended pre-treatments and germination times under the 'Prairie Flora Resources webpage'**. If you need information on seed that is not listed, please contact us and we will try to help.

**Good Luck!**

*By copying Mother Nature and pre-treating your seeds, not only are you increasing germination, but you are also helping future generations of that plant to survive.*

Some seeds have spent many years developing hard seed coats in their offspring to ensure continued survival. If no pre-treatment is used, only those seeds with the softest seed coats will germinate, weakening their chance of future survival in our harsh prairie conditions.