

Ask The Plant Groom(tm) by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom(tm)

QA 1093

Dale, We would like to grow live oak trees from acorns. Will you please tell us how? Would we grow white oak the same way?

Thank you. - C. F.

Live oak and all other varieties should be collected and planted as soon as they drop to the ground in the fall.

Here's the steps in planting and initially growing them.

Part A

- * Discard any acorns that "rattle".
- * Place all selected acorns in a container of water appropriate for the quantity collected.
- * Heat the water until its as hot as you can stand with your hand in it.
- * Remove container from heat source and allow to cool.
- * Hand remove all acorns that float and discard.
- * Drain water from the container.
- * These seeds/acorns are now ready to plant.

Part B

- * Prepared acorns may be planted in beds or containers.
- * To plant acorns in beds be sure to amend the bed well with organic matter and if in heavy clay soils add 2-3" of expanded shale also. A mix of 3" finished plant derived finished compost plus 3" of expanded shale blended as deep as a rear tined tiller will dig and crowned 6-9" in the center provides a Earth Kind bed and is excellent for starting oaks from their seeds. In sandy soils add 6" of compost, till and crown as previously recommended.
- * In containers, fill with a lightweight potting soil. One gallon containers are adequate for this however two gallon are even better. After the containers are filled firm the soil with palm and make sure 1 - 1 ½" of space remains from soil level to container top. This is important for future irrigation needs.
- * In containers insert two seeds/acorns per container approximately 1 ½" deep. A guideline that works well here is; plant these seeds 1 and ½ times their diameter deep or if an acorn measures ½" across plant it 1 and ½" deep.
- * Acorns will germinate if planted on their sides, pointed ends down or pointed ends up.
- * Outside in beds you may wish to construct a frame structure approximately 3' tall and bed width and cover with clear plastic making sure both ends may be opened for ventilation and irrigation when needed.

Part C

* In outside beds; be sure to allow one full growing season before attempting transplanting. Do this task during the following dormant season after initial planting. Example; seeds/acorns gathered, planted and started in 2006 the seedlings as a result of this action should be transplanted during the dormant season of 2007-2008. Two good months on the calendar for this task are Dec. and Jan. Feb. is usually OK too.

* Seedlings started in containers may be successfully transplanted the following fall if their root systems are undisturbed. Example; if only one seed/acorn germinated and grew or both acorns/seeds sprouted but you cut one off a soil level. If you desire to transplant both seedlings that germinated in a container then follow the guideline for transplanting at in-ground bed times.

* Always transplant at the same level the seedlings were grown in containers or bed. DO NOT plant below soil/media lines as this may lead to plant termination.

* After transplanting is completed irrigate thoroughly and maintain a moist but not wet soil. And, you should be on your way to growing mighty oaks from small acorns.

If you wish to contact me Mon. - Fri. 8:30am - 4pm and visit about this or any other horticultural information/issue I'm available at 214-904-3053.

I have burweed in my lawn. When and how can I get rid of it?

Thanks. - J.G.

If the "weed" in question is grassy like in appearance it is probably a grass/sand bur. If the bur is a non grassy or broadleaf plant it may be bur clover.

The good news is that either of these weed pests may be controlled by preventing their establishment with weed preventers selected and applied at the appropriate times according to label directions.

Aid's for grass/sand burs are applied in late Feb. and again at the end of May. Weed preventers for bur clover should be applied in Sept.

Get your weed identified then follow the suggested timetables to have less problems with your "bur" next season.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist and Master Gardener Program Coordinator-Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System, Native Texan, Author, Columnist, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide at The Plant Groom(tm). Tho have your horticultural questions answered by Dale send them to dalegroom@mycvc.net. To speak directly with a Master Gardener for free help M - F, 8:30am - 4pm dial 214-904-3053.

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