

# How to Propagate Mesquites

Easy, step-by-step guide!



Grow  
me!



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# Step 1: Harvest Seed Pods

Mesquite pods ripen and dry on the tree starting in mid/late June. Seed pods start green and ripen to colors including golden, tan, and reddish/purplish. Ripe pods come off the tree easily and feel dry and hard.

**Tip:** Harvest from trees thriving in adverse conditions and trees with especially sweet pods. These are prime genetics!



# Step 2: Remove Seeds from Pods & Husks

Ripe seed pods are hard to open.  
**Soak them** up to 24 hours until they soften.



Each pod will have several seeds within husks.  
**Use nail clippers to clip the edge of the husk and remove the seed.**

Discard seeds that look flat or have a small hole – a sign that a Bruchid beetle was there!



# Step 3: Scarify Seeds

Mesquite pods are a delicious food source for wildlife, which means that their seeds pass through the digestive system of an animal before being "deposited" in the soil.

We can mimic this scarification process\* by **gently rubbing one side of the seed against a rough surface** (such as a nail file) until you create a small hole in the seed coating. This allows the seed to absorb water.



\*Screwbean mesquite seeds require a different scarification method than Honey or Velvet mesquites. See a later slide for more info.



# \*Scarifying Screwbean Mesquite Seeds

These seeds are tiny and scarify well by pouring boiling water over the pods. Soak overnight; remove seeds from pods (no husks) and plant!



This method yields ~50% germination so we recommend planting several seeds per container and sprinkling a little soil on top.

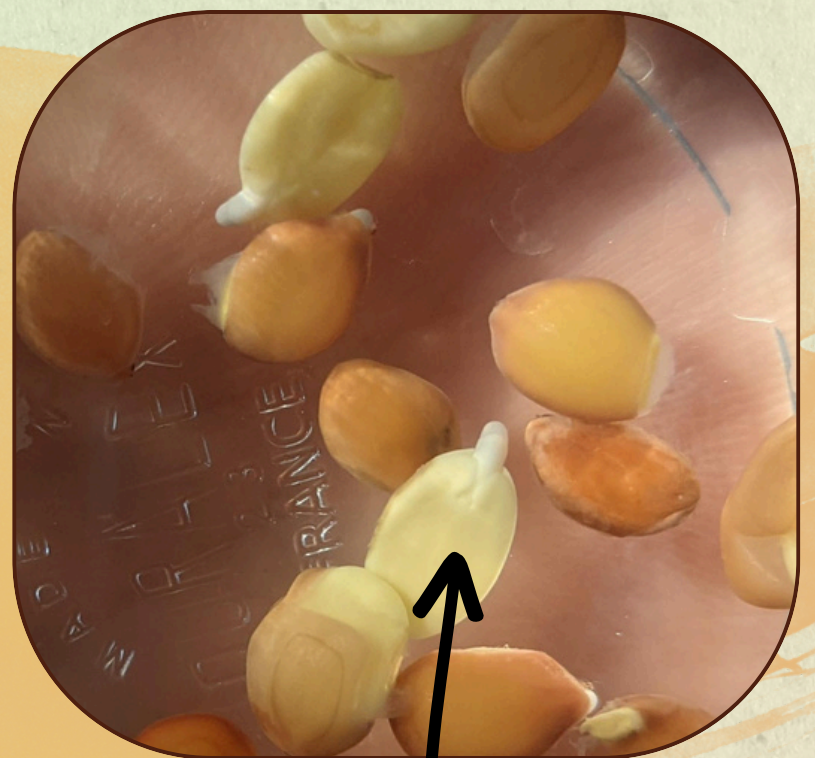


# Step 4: Germinate Seeds

At this point, you can either plant the seeds in the ground/pots or soak the seeds to give 'em a little extra help.

**If you plant directly in the ground,** over plant in case some don't come up or some of the saplings are eaten by a critter while they are tender and vulnerable. You can thin/relocate trees later if too many survive!

**If water germinating:** Put all your scarified seeds into a glass of room-temperature water. Soak until you see roots just emerging. May take up to a few days. Warmer temps = faster germination. Change the water daily.



See the root emerging?



# Step 5: Pot Seeds

Plant seeds at 1/4-1/2" depth.

Tall soda cups work great because mesquite roots grow quickly! Poke a few holes in the bottom.

Well-draining soil is best, but use what you have, as mesquites aren't picky and they'll only be in these pots for 4-6 weeks.

Outside temps must be WARM for mesquites to germinate, so plant in late spring/summer months.



# Step 6: Water Seeds

Place your pots in a warm area with dappled or indirect sunlight. Keep soil moist. Seeds may sprout in as little as a few days!

Seedlings are ready to transplant in the ground once they form one or two sets of true leaves (about a month after sprouting).



# Step 7: Transplant Seedlings

Mesquites transplant well when young and prefer to be planted in their forever home early due to fast-growing taproots – unique in trees. If needed, they can be transplanted to bigger pots and grown out for up to a few years.



# Mesquite Care Tips

Plant in native soil; don't add amendments.

Consider planting your mesquites in a rainwater-collecting basin or earthwork.

Add mulch around the base to retain moisture and build soil. Woodchip mulch is best but any organic matter helps.

Give trees a good watering when planting, then water sparingly. This encourages strong root growth. Young mesquites can survive on rainwater in cooler temps; monthly deep waterings in summer will speed their growth.

Young, tender seedlings may get munched by critters; protect them for a few months or over-plant/have backups.

