

# PRODUCING PLANTS FOR A WEED DEMONSTRATION OR COMPETITION

Weed seeds germinate at different speeds and some require specific pre-treatments to stimulate germination. This can increase the difficulties of producing a range of weed seedlings all at the same growth stage for an event on a particular date. If you have not produced a weed demonstration before, the planning and work required is greater than you might have anticipated. Please feel welcome to discuss your needs with Herbiseed at the planning stage, we have considerable experience at organising such events. The following suggestions are aimed to help you improve the chances of success with your event.

**Ensure that you have enough notice to start planning several months before the event!** Then you can check on the germination requirements and growth rates of the required species.

**Prepare more species than you expect to display.** Then if 20% of them are slow to germinate or fail to grow fast enough, you can still display the required number of species.

**Plant up at least five times as many plants of each species as you intend to display.** You can then move some to different growing conditions (warm, cool etc.) to adjust their speed of growth and select the best looking individuals on the day.

**Carry out any pre-treatments required for germination.** A method of avoiding this requirement is outlined in 'A SIMPLE METHOD' below.

**Test each batch of seed for speed of germination and plant growth.** This enables you to programme the sowing dates to achieve simultaneous arrival at the required growth stage.'A SIMPLE METHOD' (below) decreases this necessity.

**Have available a warm and a cool growing environment.** Plants which are growing too fast or too slowly can be moved between environments to adjust their growth rates so that they are at the right stage on the day.

**Make an additional extra-early sowing in advance of the expected ideal sowing date.** This is an insurance policy to cope with possible problems occurring with the ideal sowing date.

## A SIMPLE METHOD

At least 3 months before the finished plants are required, fill plastic seed trays or pots with sterile compost. Stir a teaspoonful of seed into the top 1cm. of the compost. Sow several units of each species. Water and leave in warm conditions for 2 days, then transfer to a cold environment.

For a spring or early summer display, put the sown units outside to experience winter rainfall and frosts. Protect from birds, rodents and molluscs. For a late summer display, put the sown units in a refrigerator at around 0C - 4C. Ensure that they do not dry out.

At monthly intervals, move one unit of each species into warm growing conditions. Plant up the seedlings which are ready on a date appropriate to their rate of growth and the time left to the date of the event.

For seed or further information, contact:

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