

Growing Dioscorea from Seed

As with the vast majority of succulent plant seeds, the key words are Warm, Close and Bright. Sow the seeds on the top of a good quality compost and water (spraying is best) with a dilute fungicide solution (Chinosol or a copper based compound). Seal in a plastic bag and place somewhere warm and light (20 – 30 Deg C).

Germination given ideal conditions as listed above should take 5 – 28 days. Initially a single leaf is produced and this appears to push its way out of the side of the seed. Underneath a small tuber is produced and it is from this that subsequent leaves are produced. Growth is quite fast and by the end of the first year you should have plants that look like miniatures of the eventual adult plant. Pot up when large enough into good quality cactus compost. Growth will suffer a slight check at this first potting on as the plants resent the disturbance of their roots.

Subsequent potting on should involve the whole root ball so as to minimise the disturbance. Ideally the tuber should be kept beneath the surface for the first few years, though this will mean the use of very careful watering to avoid rotting the tuber. Once the tuber is 1 cm or so across, it can be grown half buried. It will take many years to form a very large tuber and will produce its annual 'vines' every year.