

Growing Ravenela and Strelitzia from Seed

Growing Strelitzia from seed is fairly easy and can be achieved with the minimum of equipment. The instructions here refer to all 5 species and varieties.

Firstly remove the orange tuft of seed (you will notice that this end has a point – this is relevant later). For Ravenela – remove the blue waxy coating instead

Soak the seeds in warm water for 24-48 hrs as this has been shown to speed up germination. Seeds that have not been soaked may take up to a year to germinate!

Sow the seeds in a 50:50 mix of sand and soil based potting compost, pushing the blunt end into the mix, but leaving the pointed end just showing above the surface. Water the mix so it is moist but not soaking wet. Seal the pot in a Ziploc bag or similar and place somewhere warm (20-25 Deg C). Light is not important to trigger germination, so an airing cupboard is as good a place as anywhere. If placed in a propagator make sure that there is some shading over the pot as the emerging seedlings, like the adult plants, get scorched by direct sunlight.

The seeds should start to germinate within a month and this process might go on for 3 or 4 months. When the seeds germinate (you may see a small white shoot or perhaps notice that the seed has started to root), cover them with a little of the mix and move out into the light.

Grow on in bright, filtered light; feed regularly and pot on until the plant is as big as you require. At this point the plant will still appreciate regular feeding and an annual top-dressing of fresh compost in its pot. It should flower in its 5th year but this may take longer in a pot grown specimen. Strelitzia nicolai will take longer to mature.