

## Learning About Forest Ireland (LEAF Ireland)

### Acorn Growing Guide: From little acorns grow great oaks!

It has been a great year for collecting acorns. We have been distributing them to a few of our LEAF schools, so we thought it would be a good idea to create a short guide to help schools successfully germinate and grow on their little acorns into oaks. Planting, germinating and caring for acorns/ young trees is a fantastic educational experience for children of any age. Here are a few tips to achieve success in your school:

#### Important points

- Acorns can be collected from September through to October from underneath Oak trees
- Acorn can be green or brown when collected. ***It is really important that you keep them damp and do not allow the acorns to dry out!*** Collect them in a bag and cover them with damp leaves until you are ready to plant them. They may already have a small shoot or sprout. Be careful not to damage this whilst planting.
- Put all acorns in a sink or basin of water. The ones that fall to the bottom can be planted as they are full of food. The ones that float can be put back out in the forest or under a hedge in the garden as they will not germinate.

#### Steps to grow oak trees from acorns:



1. Find coffee cups/cardboard milk cartons and cut them in half. Wash out and pierce bottom of container a few times with a pencil to ensure the seed does not get waterlogged. Or you are feeling ambitious, you can make a few containers with a "viewing window/panel" in the side by cutting a hole in the side of the container and replacing it with some transparent plastic from a soft drink bottle. Place the acorn right in front of panel and the children will see it

change as it germinates.

2. Fill the containers with mixture of moist soil, compost, dead leaves, recycle old compost from empty pots and even small quantities of the schools own compost (this must be fully decomposed).



3. Place one acorn (or two depending on availability) in each pot around two inches from the surface. If the acorn has a sprout - make sure not to damage it and place the acorn on its side and gently cover it with