










From little acorns grow great oaks!

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 students 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 composted. They will not germinate

Steps to grow oak trees from acorns:

-  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 if 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.
-  Fill the containers with moist soil (you could also add compost/dead leaves)
-  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 leaves/compost/soil. Label and date them and record it in your LEAF project. Take photos and draw pictures of the acorns.
-  Place on a classroom windowsill which gets sun. Ensure soil is kept moist
-  It is very important that the soil does not dry out at any point so check pots regularly.
-  Within a few weeks the acorns will germinate, and small seedlings will be seen breaking the surface. At Christmas and Easter, the oaks should be put somewhere where they will definitely not dry out. The small oaks should be a few inches tall by the summer time. At this point they can be planted in school grounds on a weed free bed or sent home with the students. The following autumn (once the leaves have fallen off) they will need to be transplanted into larger pots.

**‘The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago
...the next best time is right now!’**