

Growing Bottle Tree From Seeds

Soil

The bottle tree prefers well-draining, moderately fertile soil with an even texture. It dislikes uneven, rocky soils and soils that are consistently wet or flooded. It prefers regular irrigation throughout the summer, about once every week or two. If planted in soils with a pH above 8.0, the plant may develop chlorosis, an unattractive yellowing of leaves caused by nutrient deficiency. Soil pH can be lowered by adding acidic materials such as organic material and powdered sulfur to the soil.

Propagation

Seeds germinate well, particularly if they are soaked in hot or warm water for 12 hours. Plants for a Future recommends planting the seeds in the spring in a greenhouse, keeping them inside for their first winter and setting them out in their permanent location in late spring or early summer once frosts have passed. Saplings are slow growing, though regular watering will speed up growth.

Maintenance

Though generally low maintenance, the tree does drop troublesome fruit pods that can cause a litter problem, particularly near sidewalks or paths. Fruit pods are resistant to decay and must be removed by hand, lest they clog a lawn mower or injure barefoot garden visitors. The seeds within the pods are covered in fine hairs, which can be a skin irritant. Some pruning should be done to elevate the canopy base, but care should be taken not to expose too much of the main trunk, as it burns easily.