

Growing Butterfly Bush From Seed

Mix about 1/8-teaspoon of the very fine seeds with 1 tablespoon of fine sand in a small, shallow dish so that the seeds will be spread more thinly when you sow them. Stir the mixture thoroughly with a teaspoon to distribute the seeds evenly within the sand.

Fill 4-inch pots with a soilless potting mix that has equal parts of perlite and peat moss or peat moss equivalent. Tap the pots against a table to settle the mix without compacting it. Add more potting mix if necessary to bring the soil level in the pot to within 1/2-inch from the rim of the pot.

Fill a 9-by-13-inch pan with 1 inch of water. Put the filled pots into the pan so that the potting mix becomes thoroughly moist by absorbing water through the holes in the bottom of the pots. Remove the pots when the mix is wet on the top.

Scatter the seed and sand mixture loosely over the surface of the potting mix in the pots, using either your fingertips or the teaspoon. Don't aim for dense coverage, but for scant, even coverage.

Press the bottom of a clean, dry 4-inch pot gently on top of the scattered seeds and sand. Don't cover the seeds with additional potting mix, since they need light to germinate. Spray the top of the pressed-down seed mixture with water from a misting bottle just to moisten the top surface.

Put the pots in an area with bright light and a temperature around 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Check available areas with a thermometer to find the best spot, or add a heating mat to maintain the temperature. Keep the potting mix uniformly moist by spraying with water from the misting bottle or by soaking the pots from the bottom again. Seeds should germinate in about three weeks.