



# Milkweed Seed Germination Protocol

*Under favorable growing conditions (warm soil, adequate moisture and light), a fairly high percentage of milkweed seed in any given lot may not germinate immediately after planting. The reason the seed does not germinate is that there is an incorrect balance of two hormones within the seed, and this leads to a condition called seed dormancy. To “break” this dormancy and get high levels of germination we employ a process called seed stratification. The protocol we use to stratify milkweed seeds prior to planting in our greenhouse is as follows.*

## Stratification Protocol

- In a Ziploc® baggie mix three to five volumes of Quikrete Play Sand® brand sand with every volume of seed. We recommend this brand of sand as we have found the grain size to be very uniform.
- Moisten the sand/seed mix with tap water so that it looks like wet sand at the beach.
- Seal the baggie and place into a refrigerator, but not the freezer, for up to three months.

*After three months of stratification, your seeds will be ready to plant.*

- For planting in a greenhouse, we recommend using a potting soil that is designed for transplant production. It may be labeled “plug” or “germination” mix with the primary component being peat moss.
- Take a pinch of the sand/seed mix that has five seeds and plant it on top of each cell or pot being planted.
- Cover the sand/seed mix with a layer of vermiculite or sand that is just thick enough to cover the seed.
- The number of days from planting to germination will depend upon greenhouse temperatures. Temperatures in the 70’s to low 80’s will result in faster germination than temperatures in the low 50’s or 60’s.

