

Cold Moist Stratification of Milkweed Seeds by Brad Grimm at Grow Milkweed Plants

Cold Moist Stratification (CMS) describes the process that seeds naturally progress through. Timing of the process occurs naturally when the seed is dispersed from the milkweed plant in the fall and continues until the seed begins to grow in the spring. The process I am presenting for CMS is designed to simulate winter conditions and can be applied to the milkweed seed at any time of the year in your home.

Materials needed:

- tap water
- paper towel
- milkweed seeds
- ziplock bag
- permanent marker
- dish soap (optional)
- refrigerator

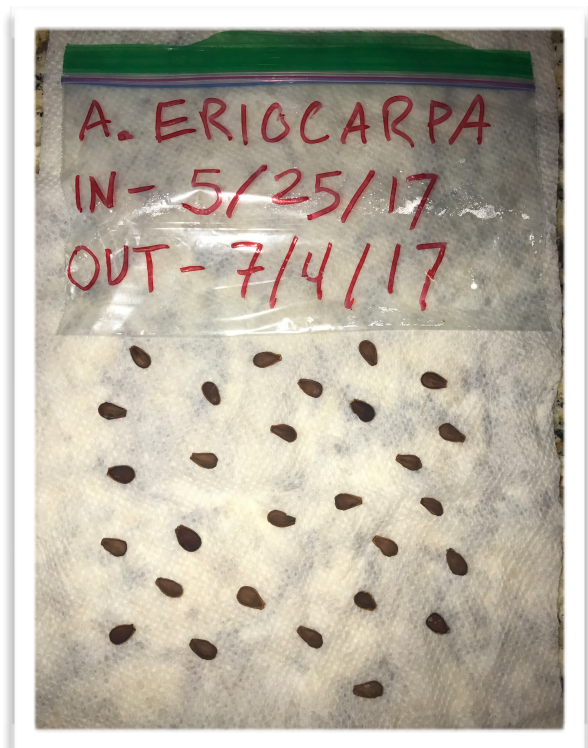
Process:

1. Clean the surface of your counter thoroughly.
2. Take one sheet off your roll of paper towels.
3. Wet the paper towel with cold tap water from the sink.
4. Optionally - Add a drop of dish soap. Reduces mold formation on paper towel.
5. Use one hand to squeeze out all of the water you can from the paper towel.
6. Spread out the paper towel on a clean surface.
7. Evenly scatter the milkweed seeds onto the paper towel.
8. Fold/roll-up the paper towel and seeds.
9. Place the paper towel, now covered in seeds, inside the ziplock bag.
10. Seal the ziplock bag while removing excess air from inside the bag.
11. Print the date and seed species on the baggie using a permanent marker.
12. Place the bag in the refrigerator for 40 to 60 days.
13. Set a reminder to retrieve the seeds 40 to 60 days from today.
14. When 40 to 60 days have elapsed, remove the seed bag from the fridge.
15. Leave the seed bag on the counter for 2 to 7 days.
16. Plant the seeds and water daily till they germinate.

Milkweed seeds. *Asclepias eriocarpa* is used in this example. Milkweed seeds should be considered dormant unless otherwise stated. Cold Moist Stratification allows the seed to imbibe water which will break its dormancy.



Milkweed seeds have been refrigerated at 37° for 40 days using the process described above. Since I removed the seeds to inspect and photograph, I also placed the seeds on a new, clean and moist paper towel before returning them to the ziplock.



After 4 days on the counter the seeds began to germinate. On day 7 - 90% of the milkweed seeds germinated.



Plant germinated seeds in soil. Seeds can be planted before germination by sowing them on the surface of soil on the day they come out of the refrigerator. Water seedlings generously until established.

