

The Ridge to Reef Watershed Project (R2RW) is a five year (with an optional sixth year) activity contributing to the achievement of USAID/Jamaica's SO2 – "improved quality of key natural resources in areas that are both environmentally and economically significant". R2RW comprises three Components contributing to the achievement of the results under SO2. Component 1 assists targeted organizations identify and promote sustainable environmental management practices by resource users. Component 2 focuses on identifying and supporting solutions to improve the enforcement of targeted existing environmental regulations, primarily in the Great River and Rio Grande watersheds. Component 3 provides assistance to key organizations to support, coordinate, and expand watershed management efforts in Jamaica. For more information about R2RW, please contact one of the following organizations:



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Sow Your Own Tree Seedlings



Can't get to a nursery to buy a tree seedling for National Wood and Water Day or any day? Don't worry. You probably have seeds that you can sow right in your own yard! Look around.



It's avocado pear season. Did you know that you can plant the seed and grow your very own avocado tree? When did you last eat ackee for breakfast? Ackee seeds are easy to catch and the trees grow very quickly. Almond seeds also sprout very easily and grow into large shade trees. And don't throw away that pit after you enjoy a nice juicy mango. Why not plant it instead and grow your own mango tree?

Here are some fun seeds to sow as a family activity. Or, why not make this part of a class project in your school?

Start with Good Seeds

The best seedlings are grown from the best seeds. Did you know that the best seeds are usually at the top of the tree or at the end of the side branches of adult trees? When choosing a tree to get your seeds from, it is wise to identify a middle-aged tree, rather than one that is too young or too old.

If you pick seeds directly off a tree, or seeds that have fallen onto the ground recently, make sure they are dry and then store them in a cool, dark place for a few days or weeks before you plant them.

mouth of the jar. It is very important to make sure the pointy end of the seed is facing down in the container. The roots will spring from the pointy end while the leaves will sprout from the flatter, rounder top end.

- ?? Now, set the container in cool, dark place for a week or so.
- ?? If you check after a few days, you will start to notice that the top of the seed is cracking open. After a while, shoots will appear and roots will be seen from the bottom.

- ?? Once the seedling has a few leaves, bring it into a sunnier spot.

- ?? When the seedling is about 15 inches high or 30 centimeters, it can be planted in a pot. Avocados make beautiful houseplants.

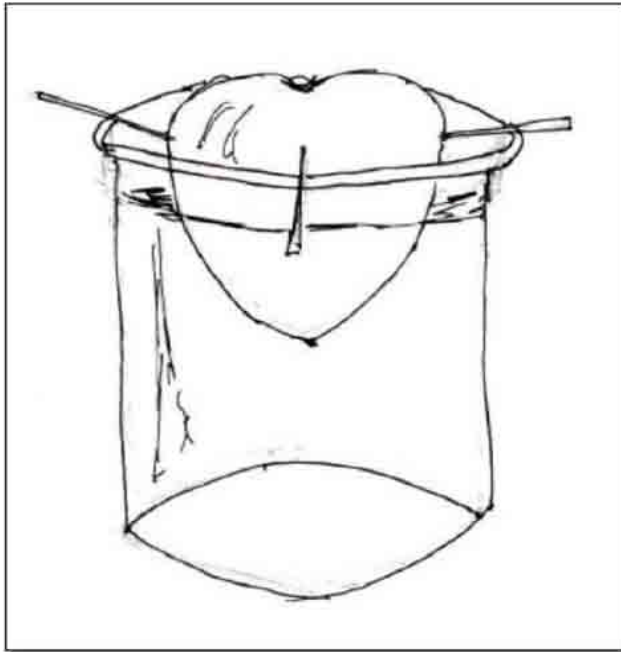


- ?? When it is about 3 feet or a metre high, you can plant it outside.

Don't be discouraged if your avocado tree doesn't bear for a long time. They may take up to ten years to bear fruit when you have sown them by hand!



- ?? Once you have your container, fill it with water up to half an inch or one centimeter from the top.
- ?? Now you will need three toothpicks or other small sticks. Hold the avocado seed with its pointy end facing down. You will want to insert each toothpick about 1/3 of the way down from the top on three.



- ?? The toothpicks don't have to go in very far. Just far enough to be secure. They will help to hold the seed in the mouth of the container.
- ?? Now, place the seed in the container and rest the toothpicks on the edges of the container or the

You can also help the seeds to grow by soaking them in water for a few days to see if the outside covering will start to crack open. The seeds that sink to the bottom are most likely to germinate. The ones that remain floating on the top could be sterile, so it is best not to use them.



Setting Methods

It is important to note that there are different methods for setting different types of seeds. To plant ackee or almond tree seedlings, you will need:

- ?? A container to hold the plant. You can use a juice or milk box with the top cut off (So don't throw them away Reuse them as seedling boxes) or a plastic bottle with the top cut off and with pinholes in the bottom to allow water to drain. Coconut shells will also work if you punch enough drainage holes in the bottom so that extra water can drain off. So will bamboo, clay pots and small plastic bags.

- ?? Some small stones or pebbles to put at the bottom of the container. You won't need more than 1.5 inches or 6



centimeters of pebbles for each container.

- ?? Some rich soil, but not soil that has too much clay. Potting soil is good, but costs a little money. If you are using soil from your own yard, collect the best that you can find and make sure it is a little sandy and well mixed so that the roots of the seedling will be able to grow easily. The better the soil you have the healthier your seedling will be.
- ?? Fill each container with the soil until it is about 2/3 full. Then, put your seed in the middle and push it down gently, but not too far. Add some more soil to cover, but only enough to fill the container about 3/4's of the way from the top. You need to leave some room to water the plant easily as it grows. A general rule of thumb is to add a layer of soil that is three or four times the thickness of the seed. If you



plant it too deep, the seed will not grow properly. If you plant it too close to the surface, it might dry out too much.

- ?? There. You've planted your seed. Now you need to set it in a darkish corner, away from the light, until it starts to sprout.
- ?? In about a week you should see some shoots emerging from the soil. At that time you can move the plant into a sunnier area or even outside in a safe place.
- ?? When the seedling is about 20 centimeters or 10 inches tall, it will be big enough to plant outside. You definitely want to plant the seedling before the roots become too big and start to grow in circles inside the container.

Setting an Avocado Seed

Most of the avocados grown in Jamaica are hybrids that are grafted onto trees. But many people think that our traditional avocado pears are the tastiest. Here's how to set an avocado seed:

- ?? First you need a jar. The mouth of the jar needs to be large enough so that the pear seed can fit through quite easily. You could also use a plastic PET bottle and cut off the top, but do not put pin-holes through the bottom this time. Juice boxes are OK but tend to be a bit tipsy for avocado seeds because they are larger and heavier than most other seeds.