



Growing tussac grass (*Poa flabellata*) from seed

1. Collect seeds, October-December

Remember to get permission from land owners before collecting seeds.

Tussac flowers early and the seeds ripen between the end of September and December: the seed heads change from green to brown and the seeds harden.

- Rub a seed-head gently between your hands, the tiny seeds should fall off easily if they are ripe and ready to collect.
- Each seed head contains thousands of seeds so you won't need many – collect a few each from different plants by snipping them off with a pair of scissors.
- Remember to leave some seed heads behind – as a rough guide don't take more than one in five seed heads.
- If possible collect seeds from plants close to the area in which you hope to plant out.
- Try to collect in dry weather and put the seeds into a paper bag so that any moisture can escape.



Ripe tussac seedheads, ready for seed collection

2. Drying and storing seeds

It's best to use seeds straight away but they store well too. If you need to store them they should be kept dry, cool and away from mice!

If keeping them for less than a year dry the seeds by loosely spreading them in a tray or cardboard box lined with paper (to avoid losing the little seeds) in a cool, dry room is fine (dry is most important – they can survive a little warmth if necessary but don't put them on a radiator or in a sunny spot). Once they are dry they can be kept in a paper bag. If you would like to store the seeds for longer have a look at our detailed information sheet ([Seed collection in the Falklands](#))

When you are ready to use your seeds rub the seed heads them lightly over an old Penguin News – then pour them into a container.



Drying native seeds



Tussac seeds

3. Planting, October-March (possibly through the winter if started inside)

- Take a lovely recycled container with some holes in the bottom (an old ice cream tub works well – especially because you get to eat the ice-cream!).
- Fill with seed sowing compost and moisten (the compost must not contain weed seeds as it's impossible to tell tussac and other grasses apart when they are small).
- Scatter your seeds thinly over the surface of the compost and press gently into the soil. The seeds are tiny so they don't need to be covered with soil.
- Pop in a poly tunnel or a warm spot outside and keep moist (but not soggy).
- Seedlings should appear in 2-4 weeks.



Tussac seedlings emerge after 2 weeks in a polytunnel

4. Potting-on

When your seedlings have four or more leaves you can transfer them into larger pots. Half milk cartons with holes in the bottom are ideal.



Cynthia's tussac seedlings at Stanley Nurseries

5. Planting out, April – September (because the ground is good and wet through the winter)

After a few months your tussac should be ready for planting out, there are a few things to consider when picking a spot:

- Avoid hungry hares, rabbits or livestock – you might need a fence to protect your young tussac.
- Tussac likes a fair amount of nutrients – it does well in hen runs or coastal areas with wildlife and wildlife poop! Consider other species like bluegrass or boxwood if you are planting in areas with poor soil.
- Young tussac are rubbish at fighting off weeds! If you plant tussac in an area which already has lots of grass you may need to roughly weed around it for a couple of years.



A newly planted-out tussac

6. Smile!

You have made 46 types of birds, hundreds of insects and seals a home. You've also started storing carbon to fight climate change.



Happy Wildlife!

Kit you will need to collect and grow tussac seed

1. Paper bag or similar
2. Seeding compost without weed seeds
3. Recycled containers for plants