

Grow *Coffea arabica* by sowing.

The coffee tree is an interesting plant with lush green foliage and fragrant flowers that produce red-coffee beans. Besides being a beautiful houseplant, it is easy to grow for novice gardeners. Coffee plants prefer bright, but indirect light and a temperature between 21 and 25 °C. The soil should be moist, but not soggy and will need less water in winter than in summer.



Grow *Coffea arabica* by sowing:

In April or May, soak 3 or 4 seeds, with its membrane, for 24 hours in lukewarm water.



Place the seeds on top of a shallow container filled with a good mix of compost for sowing and river sand. Cover them slightly with a thin layer of the growing mix—sprinkle with water in fine rain taking care of not soaking the soil.

Place the container in a small greenhouse, heated at 25 °C or cover the container with a transparent plastic bag and place close to heat, assuring a constant temperature of approximately 25 °C.

Maintain a humid soil, without over watering; a soaked soil could bring the seeds to rot.

Germination is approximately 14–21 days.

As soon as a seedling develops 3 to 4 leaves or reaches 10 cm, place it in a small and slightly deep container. Fill with the same mix and drain (coffee plant requires a slightly deep soil), then cultivate as an adult plant.



Ideal conditions for coffee cultivation

In a container

The coffee plant is a shrub type plant, from 80 cm to 100 cm tall, with large opposed lanced-shaped, dangling, shiny and persistent green leaves.

Following an elimination process a stem will form and primary branches will start, carrying at its base, clusters of white ephemera flowers. They will spread a pleasant perfume that reminds me of jasmine.

Their growth, from spring to autumn, will give over 7 to 9 months, bunches of green coloured small drupes that will turn to red at maturity (approximately 3 months). For a coffee plant home cultivated, they will not appear before approximately 3 years, and the first fruits 7 to 9 months later.

You will then witness the concomitant presence of flowers, of green and red fruits.



Nature of substrate and container size

Cultivate your coffee plant in a light and draining substrate, composed of rich soil and sand. To help drainage you could add gravel or clay pebbles at the bottom of the container.

Note: the coffee plant has deep roots, so it is better to cultivate in a deep container.

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Temperature

A *Coffea arabica* plant will develop best at an average temperature, that will not vary during the day or night, of 23 °C (between 16 °C and 25 °C). For a *Coffea robusta* plant, the ideal temperature is between 24 °C and 29 °C.

Good to know: A surrounding temperature under 13 °C will bring the coffee plant to lose its leaves. It will die under 5 °C and at temperatures over 30 °C. In winter, periods of a bit lower temperatures, between 15 °C and 16 °C, with less humidity will promote flowering. Do not place it in a direct air flow.

Luminosity

The coffee plant needs a lot of light, keep in a direct, sun protected area, or in the back of a west or north-oriented window.



Moisture content of the ambient air and water requirements

The coffee plant resents **drought**, and its leaves need a high degree of humidity:

Twice a week, during the summer, spray your plant with lukewarm water.

During summer, water regularly, keeping the soil humid without leaving any accumulated water in the saucer. Wait until the soil gets almost dry before the next watering.

In winter, reduce the watering without leaving the soil dry completely.



Exterior cultivation

You can put your coffee plant outside at the end of **spring when** the nights are hot enough and place in a humid and partly shaded area. Bring back in early autumn.

Repotting your coffee plant.

Following the rapid root growth during the first 10 to 12 months, you can repot your plant frequently. After that period, repot every 2 years.

Pruning a Coffee Plant

The initial growth of the plant is quite rapid. To maintain an erect bearing, trim it by removing the water sprouts or suckers.

Good to know after about 5 years, its bearing will clear to the bottom. Replace it with a reject that you will have kept for that purpose.

To maintain or accelerate production of flowers after the third year, make a small cut and remove one third (1/3) of the new sprouts at the end of autumn.

Fertilize

During spring and summer, add a liquid fertilizer for green plants twice a month.

Humus

On the surface, add a rich humus content mix each spring, repot if necessary.



Mistakes

Without being sick, the leaves can turn yellow:

This can occur when there is a lack of nutriment, mostly mineral salts called chlorosis. To settle the matter, add a liquid trace-element fertilizer.

It can also be caused by too much water. Let the soil dry up well before the next watering. Do not forget to empty the saucer after each watering!

The leaves are brown and fall off.

The soil was dried for a long period of time.

The soil temperature is below 13 °C.

The plant does not receive enough light.

Disease

As for possible diseases, your coffee plant can suffer an attack of microscopic mushrooms that will appear as orange **spots on** the leaves, this disease is called the leaf rust.

Pests

As most plants cultivated indoors, pests such as red spiders or cochineal or even aphids, can be transmitted by others inside plants.

Attention: you must intervene **quickly as soon as** you notice their presence.

For red spiders:

Cut and burn the affected leaves.

Spray several times with cold water (non-calciferous if possible) on all the leaves (top and bottom) and the stems also. To prevent relapses, regularly repeat the process in a warm or heated area, these mites do not appreciate cold humidity.

If nothing works out, take the plant outside for a few hours and give it an approved acaricide treatment. Do not use a versatile pesticide, it would be inactive for this type of problem.

Cochineal

If there is only a few, try to wipe off with an alcohol-soaked cloth.

If this is not sufficient, spray them with a mix of liquid black soap and white oil.

