

# How to Propagate *Ixerba brexioides*



## Taming the Tawari Tree: A Guide to Propagating *Ixerba brexioides*

The Tawari tree, scientifically known as *Ixerba brexioides*, stands tall as a unique symbol of New Zealand's native flora. With its glossy green leaves and stunning displays of white, star-shaped flowers, the Tawari has captured the hearts of many plant enthusiasts. However, cultivating this beautiful tree from scratch can seem daunting. Fear not, fellow plant lovers, for this guide will demystify the process of propagating *Ixerba brexioides*, giving you the knowledge to nurture this botanical treasure.

### Understanding the Tawari Tree

Before embarking on the propagation journey, it's essential to understand the Tawari's natural tendencies. This evergreen tree is endemic to New Zealand, thriving in moist, shady forests. Its natural resilience allows it to tolerate a range of soil types but prefers well-drained, slightly acidic conditions. Understanding these preferences will be key to your propagation success.

# Propagation Methods: Seeds vs. Cuttings

Two primary methods exist for propagating *Ixerba brexioides*:

## 1. Seed Propagation:

- **Source:** Collect ripe Tawari fruits in late summer or early autumn. Look for capsules that have turned brown and begun to split open, revealing small, black seeds within.
- **Preparation:** Soak the seeds in warm water for 24 hours to enhance germination. Sow them in a well-draining seed-raising mix, covering them lightly with soil.
- **Environment:** Place the seed tray in a warm, bright location, out of direct sunlight. Maintain consistent moisture by misting regularly.
- **Patience is Key:** Germination can be slow and erratic, taking anywhere from a few weeks to several months.

## 2. Cutting Propagation:

- **Timing is Crucial:** Take semi-hardwood cuttings from healthy, mature Tawari trees in late autumn or winter.
- **Choosing the Cuttings:** Select side shoots approximately 10-15cm long with at least two leaf nodes.
- **Preparing the Cuttings:** Remove the lower leaves and wound the base of the cutting slightly to encourage root development. Dip the end in rooting hormone powder for increased success.
- **Planting:** Insert the cuttings into a pot filled with a free-draining propagation mix, ensuring at least one leaf node is buried.
- **Creating a Microclimate:** Cover the pot with a plastic bag or use a propagator to maintain high humidity. Place in a warm, sheltered location out of direct sunlight.

## Nurturing Your Tawari Saplings

Whether you choose seeds or cuttings, caring for your developing Tawari trees is crucial for their survival:

- **Watering:** Maintain consistent moisture without waterlogging the soil. Allow the top inch of soil to dry out slightly between watering.
- **Light:** Provide bright, indirect light to your developing saplings.
- **Fertilizing:** Once established (after a few months), fertilize lightly in spring and summer with a balanced, slow-release fertilizer.
- **Transplanting:** When your Tawari saplings have developed a strong root system, they can be carefully transplanted into larger pots or, eventually, into a suitable location in your garden.

## Patience Rewards the Persistent Grower

Propagating *Ixerba brexioides* requires patience and dedication, but the rewards are well worth the effort. With careful attention and a little bit of luck, you can cultivate these majestic trees and contribute to the preservation of New Zealand's unique botanical heritage. As you witness your Tawari flourish, you'll experience the satisfaction of nurturing life, one tiny seed or cutting at a time.