

WSA Field Conference

Pollinator Pathway: What's the Buzz

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Pollinator Pathway

<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/towns-1/maryland>

<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/toolkit>

Breaking Seed Dormancy and Encouraging Germination

- Many of the native perennial seeds are protected by a hard coating to protect them from germinating too early.
- Sowing the seeds in the Fall will allow for the natural process of Scarification (breaking the hard shell) and Stratification (exposure to moist cold temperature) to occur. If the seeds are sown in the Springtime, then you may need to take steps to ensure Scarification and Stratification occur.

Seed Scarification & Stratification

- **Scarification** is weakening the hard coating of a seed to encourage sprouting. This will occur naturally if seeds are sown in the fall.
- Otherwise for spring planting it can be done mechanically by breaking a seed's shell using sandpaper, a knife, or a file.
- Don't scarify seeds until you plan to sow. Once scarified the seed quickly loses its viability.
- Pierce the outer hard coating to allow air and moisture to penetrate. Take care not to damage the interior of the seed.
- **Stratification** is exposing the seed to a period of cold and moisture. Winter cold is the natural means to stratify seeds. Sow seeds in the fall for a period of dormancy to occur.
- Otherwise, to promote stratification for spring planting put seeds in your fridge to mimic winter stratification or soak seeds in water.
- The link below to "Morning Chores" hosts articles and a good overview with steps on how to scarify and stratify seeds.

<https://morningchores.com/seed-scarification/>

<https://morningchores.com/seed-stratification/>