Food and Nutrition

Sprout your Own Seed

You can use bird seed, alfafa, sulfower, pea, the list is endless.
Pop some seeds in a jar (don't fill too full, they will swell). Cover ja with a stocking, and put an elastic band around the mouth of jar to hold the stocking on. Fill jar with water.Leave for an hour. Empty out water. Put jar in a dark spot (on an angle so any more water can drain out.) Rinse with water twice a day. Should sprout within a couple of days.

You must rinse with water at least twice a day, otherwise they will go 'sour' and smellyIt is also advised to add a product, such as aviclens, to stop the build up of bacteria. (Wetaferm's Aviclens is available from some pet stores in Australia) contributed by BBC member Daz

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To sprout seed, simply cover with a mixture of bleach and water and keep in a warm place for 24 hours. Then pour it into a flour sieve and rinse under the tap. Finish the rinse with warm water and place back in a warm area for a further 24 hours. At the end of this period the seed will just be beginning to "chit". Put the soaked seed in a container which will hold at least two-thirds more volume. Add at least twice the volume of water as there is of seed and add enough bleach to make a very strong solution. Using a mixing spoon, stir the seed into the chlorine (bleach) mixture ensuring that every seed comes into contact with the chlorine solution. Chlorine (bleach) is a contact bactericide and fungicide, i.e. it kills immediately on contact and does not need any dwell time. But you do need to mix thoroughly to ensure "contact" has been effected. Once you are satisfied that the seed is well chlorinated, tip it into the flour sieve and rinse thoroughly under a hot or cold tap, allow to drain and then use. Now let us cover the bits that worry people which I have never explained well.

The bleach to use is the common cheap bleach, not the thickened variety. Bleach is just a solution of salt and water through which chlorine gas has been passed. As soon as it comes into contact with air the gas evaporates leaving behind just salt. Inadequate rinsing just leaves behind more salt, that is all. Many people do not chlorinate adequately because they believe that the bleach may harm the seed or the birds. You may as well not bother at all if you do not use a strong bleach solution. The bleach cannot penetrate the seed as the molecules of bleach are bigger than the pores in the husk of the seed. Seeds have pores in the husk the same as our skin. Because the pores in our skin are smaller than the molecules of your blood, your blood does not leak out. Similarly you do not wash away or become bloated when you get caught in a shower of rain. Seed is a little different in that the water molecules are small enough to pass through the pores and provide the trigger and means of germination while filtering out the large bleach molecules. This means that you could soak the seed in neat bleach without it being able to penetrate the seed and maybe harm the birds. All you would be doing is using more bleach than necessary and wasting it.

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