

Seed Handling Tips

Seeds are living organisms and improper handling or storage can greatly reduce their performance. Seminis recommends all seed should be used in two years or less from purchase, but the following information will help ensure maximum shelf life.

Temperature

High temperatures and humidity can reduce seed vigor and germination. Therefore, seed should be stored in a cool, dry place, out of the sun and in closed containers. Seminis packs its seed at industry-recommended moisture percentages and containers must be kept closed to prevent humidity from damaging the seeds.

We recommend storing untreated seed, and seed treated with fungicide at 15°C (60°F). Seed that is either primed or treated with insecticide should be stored at 5°C (41°F) or less.

Generally, every 5°C decrease of storage temperature doubles the average shelf life of the seed.

Primed Seed

Some seed is primed, a process that brings the seed close to the point of germination. Priming the seed can help the seed grow, especially under stressful conditions. Because the priming process reduces the shelf life of seeds, primed seed should be planted in the same year it is primed.

Seminis recommends primed seed be stored at 5°C (41°F). It should also have a germination test six months after priming and every three months after that.

Shipping of Seed

When seed is shipped, it needs the same temperature conditions it requires when in storage. It should not be stored near a heat source or in direct sun. When on board a ship, seeds should be stored below the deck and away from boilers and other sources of heat. While loading and unloading, avoid placing the seed in direct sunlight or in hot or humid places.

Handle Seed Carefully

Seed can be damaged by rough handling. Seeds have a hard, but fragile coating protecting the living organism within. Corn, pea and bean seed are especially susceptible to damage from rough handling. Bags of these seeds should not be thrown or dropped because the seed coats and embryos can crack, resulting in a seed that won't develop properly.

Germination Tests

We recommend that each seed lot have a germination test every six months (every three months for primed seed). The germination test should be conducted by a laboratory test under ISTA or other nationally or internationally recognized rules. Germination results from field tests may vary from laboratory results and should not be used for labeling.

