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Seeds for Africa

Capparis Spinosa

Mature caper bushes can grow three feet high and spread four or five feet. They require dry heat and intense sunlight to flourish. They will be killed by temperatures below 20 degrees F. In the north, bring the plants inside during the winter or just grow them in pots in a greenhouse. Seeds are dormant and notoriously difficult to germinate. You can just try starting the seeds, but the following technique will give the best success (40-50%).

Soak the seeds in warm water for 24 hours. Put seeds in a wet towel, seal in a plastic bag and leave in the refrigerator for 6-8 weeks. Remove, soak again in warm water for 24 hours. Plant seeds 3/8 inch deep (1 cm) in a mixture of potting soil/perlite/sand (50/25/25%). Use 4-6" pots and put 4-5 seeds per pot. Seeds should germinate in 3-4 weeks. Grow until 3-5" tall. Save the best plant; cut the rest with a scissors (don't just pull them out). When transplanting, disturb the root as little as possible. For northern gardeners, when transplanting, protect plant from elements until it has taken (cover with plastic bag for the first 3-4 days, then cut top of the bag to admit some of the elements and leave a week, then remove entire bag) or use row covers. While not the easiest plant to grow, it is worth the effort to harvest and make your own capers.

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