

GROWING *JUNCUS PALLIDUS* FROM SEED

*Jenny Mackintosh – Rocky Gully Catchment Group,
Mt Helena.*

Check your parent plants for ripe seed from the middle of December. Tap the 'flower head' into the palm of your hand, and if a very fine powder falls out, that is the seed. Sow when the hot weather arrives in late Dec and Jan.

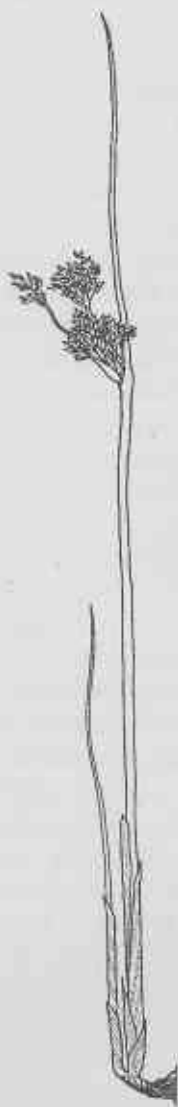
We have had success with two methods.

The first was to sow into sand trays and prick out later. Sow the seed very thinly, it helps to mix it with a little sand or rock dust. Cover with a fine layer of sand to stop the seed splashing out when the trays are watered. They do not have to stand in water, just keep them damp like any other seed. Prick out into tubes when they are big enough to handle.

The second method was to sow a tiny pinch of seed onto potting mix straight into individual tubes, sprinkle with a thin layer of very fine blue metal chips, either 2mm or 5mm in size. Keep them damp, again there is no need to stand them in water. The blue metal helps to keep the dreaded 'nursery slime' at bay. This method means much less time is consumed in pricking out, though you get a huge number of plants in each pot no matter how small a pinch you try to put in! They can of course be divided when you plant if you are doing it by hand.

If planting on creek edges, plant towards the end of winter when they are less likely to be washed away and are still growing strongly.

Juncus pallidus planted in and near Rocky Gully in Aug and Sept 1999 have done extremely well and some are about a metre high and already flowering on Jan 2000.



PALE RUSH - *JUNCUS PALLIDUS*

Forms large tufts to 2m high, in wet or seasonally damp soils from Dandaragan to Ravensthorpe. Requires fresh water, and often grows along seepage lines in sandy paddocks. It can withstand water fluctuations from surface dry in summer to seasonal inundation.

In revegetation, it is ideal ground cover in freshwater sandy seeps and creeklines.

(Note, as the groundwater turns saline, pale rush is replaced by the introduced sharp rush, *J. acutus*, originally from European salt marshes, which can tolerate very high levels of surface salt. Where they grow together, these two plants can be used to indicate exactly where freshwater turns to salt.)