



Welcome to the Canadian Cotton Growing Experiment

Growing cotton in Canada is possible, but we lack a guide. This experiment is to discover ways of growing cotton in The Great White North. Thank you for joining in!

The experiment: Grow cotton by any means possible, and report back with the results - even failures. We want to know everything. If you are getting seeds from me (Raven at Crowing Hen Farm), then they are from mixed varieties of cotton grown on our farm near Victoria, BC.

The following instructions are guidelines. You are encouraged to break them and experiment.

How to grow cotton?

As a houseplant: start the seeds any time of year. Increase the pot size as the plant grows.

As an outdoor plant: start the seeds inside 4-8 weeks prior to last frost date (about the same time as tomatoes or peppers). When the nights are above 10 degrees Celsius, plant in a warm location like the greenhouse or near a south-facing wall.

Mixed perennial: grow the cotton as an outdoor plant in the summer, and transplant into a pot for keeping indoors when the nights start to cool.

What does cotton like?

Cotton enjoys pH neutral, moderately fertile soil with good drainage. I find it generally does best with a deep watering once a week, but that's in my climate.

How to save seeds?

It takes at least 100 days from germination to the first boll (ball of seed fluff) to open. If you get a frost before they open, cut the bolls and bring them inside to dry and open. Once they are open, separate the seeds from the fluff. The key is not to grip too hard; instead, gently squeeze the seeds out of the fibre.

Why grow cotton?

Cotton is a beautiful plant with vibrant foliage. It has trumpet flowers, like hibiscus that change colour during the bloom cycle - white, pink, yellow, and the fluffy seed bolls come in green, brown, yellow, pink and of course, white. Dry them down for decoration, use the white clouds as 'snow' in a nativity scene, or spin them into yarn. Don't forget to save the seeds for next year! One flower produces over two-dozen seeds!

Please share your results (even failures) here: <https://permies.com/t/canadian-cotton>