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## Common Banana

*Musa X paradisiaca*

### My own Banana plantation

**Worth Knowing:** The perennial and slow-growing Common Banana reaches flowering maturity after three years with a height of two to three meters. The flowers come out of the center of the stem with big reddish buds that deploy a swirl of white blossoms, while the flower stalk keeps constantly growing. The yellow fruits are seedless. The fruit-bearing pseudo-stem that is solely formed by leaf sheaths, will die off, but new seedlings will sprout from the root. The in South East Asia originating Common Banana is one of the aboriginal forms of today's Fruit Banana. In old encyclopaedias it is also known by other names, such as Dessert Banana. Did you know that the banana gets its bend form because it grows towards the sun?!

**Natural Location:** Originally the Common Banana comes from the Island regions of South East Asia.

**Cultivation:** Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you can slightly roughen the seed with a soft file or a piece of sandpaper and place it in warm water for about 12 hours for priming. Then, press the seeds into moist potting compost, put just a little compost earth on top and cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out. Don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm (for instance near a heater) with a temperature between 25°C and 30°C and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Depending on the propagation temperature, the first seedlings will come up after three to ten weeks.

**Place:** The Common Banana is best kept at a bright place with a high humidity and a minimum temperature of 16° Celsius. In the summer time it can also be placed outdoors in a half-shaded and warm spot. Wind-protected places near a heat-preserving wall are perfect. Strong wind can tear the leaves and spoils the look of your banana plant.

**Care:** Young plants are best potted in a big tub after six to eight weeks. To enhance growth you should mix the earth with 25% sand. During summer, the Common Banana needs plenty of water; but avoid waterlogging so the fleshy roots don't take any damage. From April until October it is advisable to give fluid fertilizer for tub plants every two weeks.

**During the winter:** The Common Banana hibernates best at a bright place with a temperature around 15° to 18° Celsius. It doesn't tolerate temperatures below 10° Celsius. To prevent pest infestation you should spray the plant regularly with lime-deficient water. In April it will sprout again.