



## Don't Soak Your Maize Seed

If you soak your seed and plant too early, it will soon die if you do not get more rain.

Soaking the maize seed can help with early germination if there is not enough moisture in the soil. But there are a number of reasons to not soak the maize seed.

1. Hybrid seed are treated with chemicals that help protect the plant from some types of disease. These seed coatings are often pink or green. Soaking the seed will wash off a lot of this coating which reduces the value of that potential protection.
2. If there is so little moisture in the soil the seeds do not germinate without soaking, they will soon die if there is not more rain soon after planting.
3. Maize seed should **not** be soaked for very long. Once it's in water, the seed begins respiring rapidly and can run out of oxygen, leading to death of the seed. If you soak the seed and don't get it planted within 8-24 hours of soaking, it can die.



Here are the practical thresholds:

**8–12 hours** - Safe for most hybrids. Seeds take up the bulk of their needed water in this period.

**12–24 hours** - Still often viable, but risk increases. Some seeds may start to swell or show early radicle cracking.

**24–36 hours** - High risk. Many seeds begin to suffer from low oxygen and may die or lose vigor. Radicles emerging in water become extremely fragile.

**Over 36 hours** - Not recommended. Germination rate typically drops fast. Seeds may rot quickly once planted.