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Summer Sampling of Your Saffron Bed for Corm Survival

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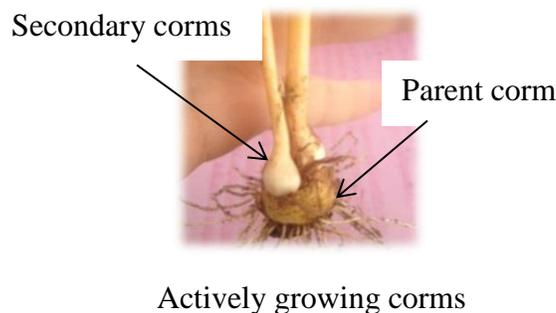
By mid-June or July, in most areas of the Northern Hemisphere, saffron corms have gone into dormancy, and will not begin to grow actively until September. Now is a great time to check on the survival of the corms. Remember that the parent corm germinated and produced leaves and potentially flowered. Over the winter and spring, that parent corm produces secondary corms, and then shrivels up and dies, leaving its progeny to produce next year's crop. Sampling your beds now will tell you how many secondary corms have developed and how large they are. In general, larger corms produce more flowers. By sampling at this time, you will get an indication of how well your corms grew over the season, and what your saffron crop may be this fall. You shouldn't dig up the entire bed, but just sample a few plants. Below are simple instructions on how to sample.

The tools you will need are: a sharp pointed hand weeding tool or trowel, the corm size template, a data sheet

1. It is ideal to sample 2% of your crop (2 plants/100). However, if your time is limited, sample less. The more you sample the more accurate will be your estimate.
2. Samples should be taken randomly throughout your beds, making an effort to sample in areas where different conditions exist, such as different soil type, moisture levels or organic matter content.
3. Locate a site to sample, ideally a place where a whorl of leaves can still be seen.
4. Using a sharp pointed tool or trowel, gently pry up the clump of corms, and shake off the soil.
5. Sort the corms by size, and record how many of each size you have.
6. Dig a hole, and replant the corms, making sure they are right side up.



Corm sampling tools



Actively growing corms



Dormant corms after summer sampling

For more information:
<http://www.uvm.edu/~Saffron/>

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