

Lagarostrobos franklinii – Huon Pine

Lagarostrobos franklinii, commonly known as the Huon Pine, is a conifer native to the wet southwestern corner of Tasmania. It is the sole species in the *Lagarostrobos* family. It is a slow growing, but long-lived tree. Some living specimens of this tree are in excess of 2000 years in age!

Huon pine grows to 10-20m tall in the wild, exceptionally reaching 30m, with arching branches and pendulous branchlets. The leaves are spirally arranged, very small and scale-like, 1-3mm long, covering the shoots completely. It is dioecious, with male (pollen) and female (seed) cones on separate plants. The male cones are yellow, 5-8mm long and 1-2mm broad. The mature seed cones are highly modified, berry-like, with 5-10 lax, open scales which mature in 6-8 months, with one seed 2-2.5mm long on each scale.

The timber is highly prized for its golden yellow colour, fine grain and natural oils that resist rotting. It was and is still highly valued as a rot resistant marine timber.

This species is frost tolerant and prefers well-drained medium loam or light sandy soils.

Propagation

WHEN TO SOW – in warm areas or in a glass house - at any time In frost prone areas sow when the danger of frost has passed. Best germination occurs at a temperature of 20 to 22°C.

WHERE TO GROW – Full sun or part shade in any well-drained soil. They can be grown in the garden or in large pots.

SOWING – place seeds in a cup of warm water, leave overnight then drain and sow. Fill a pot or tray with any good quality potting mix. The media needs to be well-draining so mix in some clean light river sand to a maximum of 20% wet thoroughly and compress.

Sow seeds thinly on the surface and cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep the soil moist and cover with clear polythene until germination in about 2 - 5 weeks.

CULTIVATION – Thin the seedlings out if crowded, transplant or pot at 5cm ensuring that you disturb the roots as little as possible. Water in well and water regularly until established, thereafter as needed.