

Pinus species

Pine seed germinates more readily after a short period of stratification (cold treatment) for 75 to 90 days at about 4°C. Mix the seed in a cupful of fine, clean, moist sand, bag the sand and seed and place it in the crisper of your refrigerator. Check weekly to ensure that that sand is still moist...that is, with just enough water that it will drip slowly if squeezed. Some seed may even germinate during stratification.

Once stratification has been completed, sow your seed in a good quality medium potting mix in a seed tray. The ideal time to sow is late winter, but any time where you have a daytime temperature of 18°C is satisfactory. Sow the seed at a depth equal to the length of the seed and keep the medium lightly moist and place your seed tray in a warm position away from direct light.

Plant seedlings out into their permanent positions as soon as possible and protect them for their first winter or two from frost and wind. Plants have a very sparse root system and the sooner they are planted into their permanent positions the better they will grow. They can be happily planted out once they are 5 to 10cm in height.

Seedlings benefit from a weed-free environment and from mulching. Planting out trees larger than about 80cm can cause slow growth for several years. This also badly affects root development and wind resistance.

Protect young seedlings from slugs and snails.

