

Cedrus species

Cedrus seeds have only shallow natural dormancy and require only a short period of cold stratification to enable germination to occur.

The seed should first be soaked in water at room temperature for 24 hours and then drain it off and mix the seeds with a little clean, damp sand or damp vermiculite and placed in a clear plastic bag at temperatures between 3-5°C.

It is essential that the seeds are not waterlogged in the plastic bag or they may rot.

This pre-treatment should last between 2-4 weeks to ensure best possible germination percentages.

Some variation in temperatures appears to be acceptable with some research indicating that temperatures of around 9°C give optimum results. After 2 weeks, check the seed every few days for signs of germination. Gently remove germinated seeds from the bag and plant them in a small pot containing a good quality potting compost. At this stage you may sow all of the seed, even those that have not begun to germinate. Keep them at room temperature – around 20°C. Once the seedlings appear above the compost give them plenty of light, but not full sun.

Cedar species in general are prone to fungal diseases (damping off) just after germination. You can use fungicide to prevent this. Keeping the compost only slightly damp and low frequency watering combined with good air circulation and low humidity will also help greatly.

Initial growth is quite slow with seedling reaching 3-5 cm in their first year. Rate of growth will accelerate in the second and subsequent years. Keep the seedlings well watered but never overwatered.

Although these trees are very tolerant of cold temperatures, whilst they are growing in containers protect the roots from severe winter frost. Once they have developed to a large enough size, perhaps after 3 or 4 years plant them in their permanent position.