

Sequoia species

Sequoia sempervirens – Coast Redwood

Sequoiadendron giganteum – Giant Sequoia

Sequoia sempervirens, variously known as the Californian Redwood or Coastal Redwood are an icon of the Sierras. This stupendous tree grows anywhere from 60 to 110m tall. The tallest living species on Earth they are nature's skyscraper. Just a tad large for the average backyard, but they go great with the acreage mountain retreat...and they make superlative bonsai subjects.

Native to the west coast of USA, the Redwood has thick, furrowed bark in a rich red brown, in bonsai subjects often exfoliating to reveal fascinating colour combinations in the trunk. The dark green needle-like foliage and the small decorative cones make an attractive feature

The tree can grow in a range of soils in full sun or part shade (while young anyway) and is moderately frost tolerant.

Propagation

Propagation is straightforward. *Sequoia sempervirens* seed germination benefits from 60 to 90 days cold stratification but can germinate without pretreatment. *Sequoiadendron giganteum* requires 60 days cold stratification to ensure good and even germination.

Stratification

Seed will not generally break their dormancy unless exposed to a period of low temperature and moist conditions known as stratification recreating the circumstances of a cold northern winter. This period of "chilling" or stratification can be accomplished first soaking the seed for 24 hours and then by placing seed in a moist, sterile (pasteurized) growing medium, such as a mix of equal parts clean sand and peat or sphagnum peat moss, in a plastic bag or disinfected container. Enclose the container in a tightly sealed plastic bag and place it in the non-freezer section of the refrigerator for 60 to 90 days. Towards the end of the stratification period seeds may start to sprout. Seeds are then separated from the stratification medium and germinated at 17 to 22°C.

After stratification sow lightly in a good medium potting mix (cover seed to only about 1 to 2mm germinate). *Sequoia* likes light to germinate and a temperature in the range of 15 to 20°C, preferably in the higher end of that range.

Prick individual seedlings out into individual tubes as soon as they are large enough to handle and grow on until at least 15cm in height. Plant out in their permanent position after the danger of frost has passed. It likes a deep, moderately fertile and moisture retentive but well-drained soil and is best suited in a sheltered, sunny position. Plants, and especially seedlings less than 2 years old, are frost tender so in cooler climates it is best to grow these on in conditions where they can be given some frost protection.

