

Picea abies – Norway Spruce

This is the iconic and 'Classic' Christmas Tree! Picea abies or the Norway Spruce is a tough and vigorous tree with a dense habit which can provide a habitat for many birds and mammals, seeds are also eaten by birds.

Very adaptable tree but prefers a deep loam soil with a pH between 5 – 7.5 and an annual rainfall of up to 900mm.

Picea abies seeds are quite easy to germinate and grow, dormancy within the seed is short and easily broken. Success can be expected even when seeds are sown without any pre-treatment, but the benefit of a short stratification period is that a greater percentage of the seeds will germinate within a few days of each other.

Pre-treatment

Soak seeds in water for 24hrs.

Drain away water and place seeds in a zip lock bag, put in the fridge. Make sure that the seeds are not waterlogged or dry out otherwise this treatment will be an ineffective pre-treatment.

Check seeds weekly for signs of drying out, you could add some dampened perlite or vermiculite to help the seeds stay moist during this period.

After 4 weeks the seeds are ready to be sown.

Germination

Use good quality seed raising mix and fill trays/tubes, firming gently. Sow seeds on the surface of the media and cover with 2mm of vermiculite or sieved potting media. Water gently and keep at room temperature.

Germination should begin 10 – 14 days after sowing.

Seedlings should grow between 2 and 10cm in their first season, these should then be fine growing in full sun watering well and keep weed free.

Growth will speed up after this and then pot on as required. After 2 – 3 years they will be ready to be planted in their permanent position.