

Propagating Pinus *Pinaceae*

From *Seeds* by Jekka McVicar (2001) – Royal Horticultural Society

A genus of hardy evergreen conifers. Plant in a sunny situation avoiding waterlogged sites.

Pinus sylvestris AGM (Scots pine)

Medium seeds

Hardy evergreen perennial

Yellow male flowers grow at the base of the shoot in clusters

Crimson female flowers are carried in pairs at the end of the current year's shoot

Small oval cones start green and ripen to dark brown

Long aromatic green needles

Collect seed in autumn from 2-year-old cones. Mix the seed with damp vermiculite and place in a refrigerator for 3 weeks. Sow into pots or modules using standard loam-based seed compost (substrate) mixed with coarse horticultural sand. Mix to a ratio of 1 part compost + 1 part sand. Cover with vermiculite or compost and place under protection at 15°C (60°F). Germination takes 4-12 weeks. Overwinter young plants in a cold frame. Plant into growing position 3 years after germination.

Recipe for sowing, planting and growing *Pinus sylvestris*

Conifers differ from other trees because they produce seeds exposed or uncovered on the scales of fruits. The fir cone, which houses the seeds, takes time to develop. Young cones are nearer the tip of the branch; more mature ones develop further in. If you look carefully it is quite easy to age them using this method, they also change from green to brown in most cases.

Ingredients:

1 plastic bag

Seeds

Damp vermiculite

1 waterproof pen

1 tie

5 seeds per module or 8 seeds per pot

1 module tray

OR

1 x 8cm (4 in) pot

Standard loam-based seed compost (substrate) mixed with coarse horticultural sand to a ratio of 1 part compost + 1 part sand.

Pre-wetted vermiculite

White plastic label

Method:

In autumn collect the seeds from ripe (2-year-old cones. Mix the seed with a handful of damp vermiculite and place this mixture into a plastic bag. Seal the bag and label using the pen. Place the bag into a refrigerator for 3 weeks. In late autumn or early winter, fill the tray or pot with compost, smooth over and water in well. Sow the chilled seeds mixed with the vermiculite (you do not need to clean the old vermiculite off) thinly. Sow on to the surface of the compost. Press gently into the compost with the flat of the hand. Cover the seed with more vermiculite. Label with the plant name and date. Place the container in a warm light place out of direct sunlight at an optimum temperature of 15°C. Germination takes 4-12 weeks. Winter the young seedlings in a cold frame. When the seedlings are strong enough (they are very slow growing) divide them and repot individually using the same size pot. Grow on outside for a further 2 years before planting out into their final growing position.