



SIMPLE FORESTRY: PLANTING PINE TREES FROM SEED

There has been information published on Facebook lately about planting a whole pinecone to grow a tree. This is very unlikely to succeed as the cone is the container for the seed, and provides protection. It does not allow sunlight to reach the seed. The final reason this will likely not work is that the seeds will be too deep to germinate successfully.

You can however, harvest the seeds from the cone, and plant the seed. Make sure you gather a pinecone that is still closed. If it is open it is most likely that the seeds are not in the cone any longer.

MATERIALS:

- Seeds from a pinecone
- Paper sack
- Resealable plastic bag
- 4-inch pot
- Combination of potting mix, sand, fine pine bark and peat moss

PROCEDURE:

1. Harvest a closed pinecone (or two).
2. Place the cones in a paper sack.
3. Put them in a warm, well-ventilated room.
4. Shake the sack every few days.
5. When the cone is dry enough to release the seeds, you will hear them rattling around in the bag.
6. Place the pine seeds in a resealable plastic bag and store them in the freezer for three months. This process, called stratification, mimics three months of winter, which many

seeds require (outdoors, the seeds would lie buried under pine needles and other plant debris until spring).

7. Once three months have passed, plant the seeds in a 4-inch (10 cm.) container filled with a well-drained potting medium such as a combination of potting mix, sand, fine pine bark and peat moss. Be sure the container has a drainage hole in the bottom.
8. Plant one pine seed in each container and cover it with no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (6 mm.) of potting mix.
9. Place the containers in a sunny window and water as needed to keep the potting mix slightly moist. Never allow the mix to dry out, but do not water to the point of sogginess. Both conditions can kill the seed.
10. Once the seedling is at least 8 inches tall transplant the tree outdoors.