

STRATIFIED PINE SEED FOR DIRECT SEEDING

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Stratifying dormant loblolly pine seed to hasten germination greatly increases the success of direct seeding. Quick germination reduces the time that the seed is exposed to birds and rodents, which are a much worse hazard in the woods than in the nursery. It also enables the seedlings to take advantage of early spring growing conditions.

Recent tests with several lots: of dormant loblolly seed intended for field sowing indicated that 90-day stratification (in wet sand at 380 F.) speeded up germination better than shorter periods, though shorter periods were of some benefit. For example, untreated seed from one lot had no germination in 20 days after sowing, only 6 percent in 30 days after sowing, and 50 percent in 75 days. Stratifying seed from the same lot for 30 and 60 days gave somewhat quicker germination (8 percent in 15 days for 60-day stratification), Ninety-day stratification, however, was far superior, with 59 percent germination in 15 days. Stratification occasionally decreased total germination, but in direct seeding long-delayed germination is of very little value.

When stratifying lots of seed weighing more than 5 pounds, extraordinary precautions should be taken to prevent overheating. Seed should be carefully inspected and thoroughly stirred at least once each week.

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