

A few examples of common trees found in Toronto parks and public spaces, and how to start them from seed:

Leaf Name	Seed(as is) When to look for seeds/	Seed ready How to stratify** / prepare for planting:
Pine*	Aug - Nov	Soak seeds in room temperature water for 24hrs, then cold stratification (2-4°C) for 60 days
Tamarack	Aug - Oct	Cold stratification (2-4°C) for 60 days
Spruce*	Aug. Feb	Soak seeds in room temperature water for 24hrs, no further treatment needed.
Maple *	October	Soak seeds in room temperature water for 24hrs, then cold stratification (2-4°C) for 90 days, plant soon after.
Oak *	Sept - Oct	Best results: plant in outdoor seedbed, OR: warm stratification (20°) for 3-12 days, then cold stratification (2-4°C) for 90-120 days
Hickory	Sept - Oct	Best results: plant in outdoor seedbed, OR: cold stratification (2-4°C) for 150 days
Sumac	Sept. June	Cover seeds with water, bring to a boil and let stand to cool for 24hrs, seeds will swell

*Some varieties do not seed every year

****Stratification:** procedure for treating seeds to stimulate germination, often simulating winter (dormancy) conditions. To stratify; place seeds in 3X the volume of stratifying mix and seal in a freezer bag with some air, check monthly for moisture loss.
Stratifying mix: a damp mixture of 50% of damp sand, 50% dry peat moss or peat moss alternative.

Dormancy: The condition in a viable seed, which prevents it from germinating in the absence of adequate conditions such as suitable temperature, moisture, light, etc. Many (but not all) species of tree REQUIRE a period of dormancy in order to germinate.

Germination: Start seeds on small pot, cup with drainage, or nursery trays, until it is big an healthy enough to survive outdoor sewing. When planting outdoors be wary of animals such as squirrels that will dig up and eat your seed.

More information:

Creasey, K R. *Guidelines for Seed Pretreatment*. Angus, Ont: Ministry of Natural Resources, Southern Ontario Unit, 1993. Print.

Farrar, John L. *Trees in Canada*. Ottawa: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd, 1995. Print.

Kock, Henry, Paul L. Aird, John D. Ambrose, and Gerald E. Waldron. *Growing Trees from Seed: A Practical Guide to Growing Native Trees, Vines and Shrubs*. Richmond Hill: Firefly Books, 2008. Print.

Watts, May T. *Tree Finder: A Manual for the Identification of Trees by Their Leaves*. Rochester, N.Y: Nature Study Guild, 1991. Print.