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Mittelmeer - Pinie

Stone Pine

Pinus pinea

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Holidaymakers of the Mediterranean region know all too well the feeling of resting in the shade of a pine tree and taking in the harsh spicy fragrance of the soft, dark-green needles. With just a little effort you can create this atmosphere in your home since the Italian Stone Pine can easily be cultivated in a tub, where it also will grow its typical sunshade crown. Because of its eatable seeds, the pine kernels, the Stone Pine is being cultivated since ancient times. A single tree can produce up to 60 kg of seeds.

Natural location: The natural habitat of the Stone Pine is the northern Mediterranean region from the Iberian Peninsula to Anatolia.

Cultivation: Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you can place the seeds for 24 hours in warm water for priming. Then, plant the seeds about 1 cm deep into moist potting compost and cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out. Don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm with a temperature between 20°C and 25°C and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Usually it will only take one or two weeks until germination.

Place: The Stone Pine likes to be kept in a full sunny spot. From May until September it can also be placed outdoors.

Care: The Stone Pine can grow in every type of soil, but best is a mix of two thirds of tub plant earth and one third of coarse gravel or expanded clay. Since the tree develops very deep reaching tap roots, you might want to choose a tall pot or tub for planting right from the start. Every two years you can shift up to a bigger container. The Stone Pine tolerates dry periods - nevertheless, a consistent watering is advisable. From April until October you can provide your plant with fluid fertilizer for conifers every four weeks. You can enhance the growth of the typical tree crown by pruning the lowest two branch rows. During spring you may also cut back two thirds of the tips of the fresh shoots, even before the plant develops its needles. That way you can slow down the growth of your tub plant.

During the winter: Experts still argue whether the plant is frost-resistant up to -8° or up to -15° Celsius. Any way, it is best to keep your tub plant in a bright and cool, but frost-free place during hibernation. Water the tree modestly, but don't let the clotted roots dry out.