THE SECRET LIFE OF TREE SEEDS

EVERY TREE SEED CONTAINS A MINIATURE LIVING TREE

When you see a giant tree in the forest, do you ever stop and think that it all began with a tiny seed? A Sitka spruce seed weighing 2.2 mg can produce a tree 93 m high, with a weight more than 32 billion times that of the original seed. Here are some more interesting facts about a few of the tree seeds of British Columbia.

**Claro sedge**
This member of the cypress family has a particular habit of growing from its roots. It can withstand poor soils and dry conditions, which makes it a good choice for planting in the coastal areas.

**Balsam fir**
The seeds of this tree are held in small cones, which are shed soon after the seeds mature. The seeds are dispersed by wind and animals.

**Garry oak**
Garry oak seeds are large and have no wings. The tree grows in coastal regions where it can experience high winds and salt air.

**Western juniper**
Western juniper seeds are small and have no wings. They are dispersed by wind and animals.

**Yellow pine**
Yellow pine seeds are small and have wings. They are dispersed by wind.

**White spruce**
White spruce seeds are small and have wings. They are dispersed by wind.

**Environmental cues**
For British Columbia tree seeds, the most important environmental cues are temperature, moisture, and light. When a tree seed is exposed to these cues during the fall, it doesn’t start growing right away. This waiting period, called dormancy, is not a period of death. Instead, it’s a way for the seed to prepare for the next growing season. Dormancy is broken by exposure to warmth and light, which triggers the seed to germinate and grow.