

Ref: 277141

November 14, 2023

From: Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Forester, Shane Berg

Re: Chief Forester Guidance on Seed Supply and Use with Increasing Demand Due to Wildfire

Purpose and Context

This document provides guidance on issues related to the supply and use of tree seed given the increased pressure on seed supply resulting from climate change impacts such as wildfire and drought. The intended audience is all parties involved in seed production, acquisition, and use, including ministry staff, licensees, consultants, orchard owners, and nurseries.

British Columbia is seeing increasingly large areas affected by wildfire and drought. These natural disturbance events, combined with the number of reforestation programs operating on the land base, an increasing use of direct seeding, large numbers of seed owners, and known constraints on seed supply, will require collective action and planning to ensure an adequate supply of tree seed and to make best use of the available seed. Implementing the guidance below will contribute to efficient reforestation programs for harvested areas and those impacted by disturbances like wildfire.

Individuals from a wide variety of public and private sector organizations make decisions that affect the supply and use of tree seed for the reforestation of Crown lands. Given the diverse parties involved, this document provides general recommendations intended to encourage all parties to act in ways that provide optimal benefit for British Columbians. As such, this guidance addresses both ministry programs and the operations of organizations that are private sector or external to the ministry.

Management of seed inventories

1. Seed owners should review their seed inventories and continually assess their seed needs in keeping with climate-based seed transfer (CBST) and considering seed demand for other reforestation activities.
2. Sellers of orchard seed should make seeds available to satisfy current sowing needs. Where supply is limited, the stockpiling of large reserves of orchard seed is discouraged.
3. Seed deemed surplus should be identified as such on the ministry's Seed Planning and Registry system (SPAR) so that others may access and use it.

Reforestation planning, strategies, and assessments

4. Where the supply of orchard seed is limited, its use should be prioritized to the most productive sites on the timber harvesting land-base.
5. Where seed supplies, orchard and/or wild seed, are limited (less than a 3-year supply), avoid seed intensive uses such as direct and/or drone seeding. The use of orchard seed should focus on the growing of seedlings for reforestation.
6. To support planning and assessment, the ministry will continue to update forest inventories and refine the estimates of denuded areas requiring reforestation.
7. With various partners, the ministry will continue to monitor seed supply and demand and undertake seed supply and demand forecasts.
8. Co-ordinated reforestation plans and landscape-level reforestation strategies should be developed to optimize the use of seed by the various reforestation programs and FRPA section 108 funded licensee programs operating in wildfire-affected areas.

Seed production and acquisition

9. Orchard managers should defer roguing orchards in those cases where this activity will reduce critical seed production in the short-term.
10. Wild stand seed collections should be undertaken where seed shortages have been determined.
11. The ministry will continue resourcing BC's tree improvement program and existing orchards to sustain seed production and consider orchard improvements and expansions.

Nurseries

12. Tree nurseries should maximize seedling yields by adjusting sowing factors and utilizing all suitable plugs.

Additional specific directions, consistent with this general guidance, may be provided to programs over which the Chief Forester exercises direct oversight.

Further information on seed use and seed planning is available from Forest Improvement and Research Management Branch

[\(https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/tree-seed/seed-planning-use/\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/tree-seed/seed-planning-use/)

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