
CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



SAN DIEGO UNIT

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Release Date: 09-01-05

CDF Goes Cone Collecting

SAN DIEGO - The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) is currently involved in collecting seed cones to supplement their inventory of native tree seed. CDF is mandated by the Public Resources Code to annually survey, collect, and have adequate supplies of native conifer tree seed in order to maintain a statewide inventory of regionally appropriate tree seedlings. This is done in order to provide replacement trees for areas devastated by disease, drought, fire, or other statewide reforestation projects.

The forests in the mountains of San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties are currently being harvested for cones. CDF has targeted 1000 bushels of cones for collection within the forested areas of Southern California. Conifer trees have naturally occurring cycles of cone production but are not necessarily annual. Some species yield cone seeds every three to six years. It is important to track these events and to move rapidly to collect the cone seeds when the opportunity arises. Collection teams are currently in the beginning phase of such an opportunity, which is expected to last about four weeks.

Over the last five years we have seen thousands of acres of conifer trees destroyed by a combination of bark beetle infestation exacerbated by several years of drought and topped off by devastating wildfires in 2003. To deal with the tree loss, the need for increased seed collection is very important. Another reason for seed collection is the apparent ability of the Sugar Pine in southern California to avoid the "Blister Rust" disease that has destroyed thousand of acres of Sugar Pine trees in other regions of the state. The Sugar Pine is currently going through a heavy cyclic cone crop this year that has not been seen in many years. Researchers are very interested in examining the Southern California Sugar pine seeds to see if they possess some type of natural genetic resistance to the "Blister Rush" pathogen.

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Media note: Arrangements can be made for on site coverage of the seed collection efforts.