

Canadian Tree Nursery Association reports over 5.3 billion seedlings needed to begin restoration of just 15% of forests destroyed in 2023 and 2024 Wildfires

(Vernon Bridge, PEI, October 29, 2024) – Today, during the Atlantic Forest Nursery conference, the Canadian Tree Nursery Association-Association Canadienne des Pépinières Forestières (CTNA-ACPF) unveiled alarming new data on Canada's forest restoration challenge following recent wildfires. Executive Director Rob Keen stated, “We need over 5.3 billion seedlings to begin restoring only 15% of our forests destroyed by 2023 and 2024 wildfires. Action on this is urgently required by our Prime Minister, Premiers, and Forest Ministers.”

The data below shows the number of seedlings required by jurisdiction to start mitigating the impacts of 2023 and 2024 wildfires:

Seedlings required to restore just 15% of Canada’s forests destroyed in 2023 & 2024 wildfires

Province	2023*	2024**	Total Forests Destroyed (Ha)	Area Requiring Planting (Ha)	Planting Density (sdlgs/ha)	Required Seedlings
Quebec	5,200,000	249,649	5,449,649	817,447	1,800	1,471,405,230
BC	2,840,545	1,074,164	3,914,709	587,206	1,500	880,809,525
NWT	4,160,000	1,671,430	5,831,430	874,715	1,500	1,312,071,750
Alberta	2,200,000	708,115	2,908,115	436,217	1,600	697,947,600
Sask.	1,850,829	905,485	2,756,314	413,447	1,500	620,170,650
Ontario	441,473	86,657	528,130	79,220	1,400	110,907,300
Yukon	220,000	171,806	391,806	58,771	1,500	88,156,350
Manitoba	198,633	266,785	465,418	69,813	1,500	104,719,050
New Brunswick	856	197	1,053	158	1,500	236,925
NFLD	21,883	14,000	35,883	5,382	1,500	8,073,675
Nova Scotia	25,096	-	25,096	3,764	1,500	5,646,600
Total	17,159,315	5,148,288	22,307,603	3,346,140		5,300,144,655

*2023 data [https://ciffc.ca/sites/default/files/2024-03/03.07.24_CIFFC_2023CanadaReport%20\(1\).pdf](https://ciffc.ca/sites/default/files/2024-03/03.07.24_CIFFC_2023CanadaReport%20(1).pdf)

** Totals as of Sept 15, 2024

(Note: These numbers are conservative and assume 15% of burned areas will be replanted at a density of 1500 - 1800 seedlings per ha as per standards in each jurisdiction. This planting is separate and distinct from the forest industries legal responsibility to replant post-harvest.)

The planning and growth of seedlings for forest restoration typically requires two to four years, which means our expert nurseries must make long-term investments in staff and infrastructure to guarantee availability of the right trees. Quebec-based, Mike Downing, Chair of the CTNA-ACPF, observed, “Our tree nurseries, who specialize in producing

seedlings for forest restoration, serve as significant local employers in many rural Canadian communities, offering jobs for both permanent and seasonal workers. Strategic planning positively impacts the health of our forests, our communities, our climate and the economy.”

The 2023 wildfire season set new records and 2024 is expected to be the second worst season in recent decades. The urgent need for forest restoration post wildfire is worsened by provincial budget cuts. British Columbia plans to plant 58 million fewer trees in 2025 than in 2024, a surprisingly regressive move.

Keen noted, “The Federal government's commendable 2 Billion Tree (2BT) planting initiative, announced in 2020 was made before the recent significant wildfires.” He added, “It is now obvious the 2BT planting target and execution mechanisms are insufficient to address the catastrophic losses of 2023 and 2024. However, the lessons learned during the 2BT program development sets the stage for increasing overall restoration efforts beyond the program’s 2031 end date. Government must ramp up their efforts to restore their Crown forests and prepare for future challenges. Governments must invest in the public’s natural resource assets to ensure their long-term health and all the benefits they provide.”

The CTNA-ACPF members are capacity ready and committed to meeting the current and increased demand for tree seedlings crucial for wildfire forest restoration. However, current policies, slow execution processes, and the lack of long-term forest seedling demand commitment from Government’s to support Crown forest restoration, impede our member’s planning and forward resource/capital allocation in line with Government commitment. By building these partnerships, we can ensure a reliable supply of quality seedlings, fostering healthy forests for future generations.

The CTNA-ACPF recommends:

1. **Increasing and ensuring long-term Federal and Provincial commitment to the restoration of Crown forests:** The existing forest restoration supply chain is ideally positioned to respond to increased planting demands. However, this will require addressing the barriers of planning and implementation, and governments making long-term predictable demand commitments. This will enable public and private growers to self-invest effectively to meet the challenge.
2. **The Prime Minister committing to expanding the 2 Billion Tree Program beyond 2031.**
3. **Engaging western science and traditional knowledge to ensure the “right trees are planted in the right place.”**
4. **Addressing labor shortages in the nursery sector** and equipping workers with the training and skills for sustainable tree seedling cultivation.
5. **Start now!**

The CTNA-ACPF urges all stakeholders—including government, private sector partners, and the public—to prioritize a material increase in tree planting as essential to address wildfire devastation, support the sustainable rural economy, and champion more aggressive environmental stewardship in response to climate change.

Together, we will ensure our forests thrive for generations to come.



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For more information, please visit <https://ctna-acpf.ca/news> - for more information or to schedule an interview in French or English contact: Don Huff at huffd@ecostrategy.ca or 416-805-7720

About Canadian Tree Nursery Association-Association Canadienne des Pépinières Forestières:

The Canadian Tree Nursery Association-Association Canadienne des Pépinières Forestières (CTNA-ACPF) advocates on behalf of 60 tree nurseries ([CTNA-ACPF Membership](#)) from coast to coast to coast. Formed in 2023, the CTNA-ACPF is the only national voice representing tree nurseries in Canada. Our members grow more than 95% of the nation's forest restoration tree seedlings.

Founding Directors:

Ryan Scott, [Scott and Steward Forestry Consultants Ltd.](#)

Mike Downing, [L'office des producteurs de plants forestiers du Québec \(OPPFQ\)](#)

Brent Forbes, [Somerville Nurseries Inc.](#)

Scott Formaniuk, [Coast to Coast Reforestation Inc.](#)

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Founding Sponsors:

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