

7.3+ Billion Tree Seedlings Needed to Restore Just 15% of Forests Burned by Wildfire (2023–2025)

VICTORIA, B.C. – January 30, 2026 – New data reveals a staggering gap in Canada’s post-wildfire forest restoration efforts. Current programs are restoring only a small fraction of forests lost to recent wildfires. The Canadian Tree Nursery Association–Association Canadienne des Pépinières Forestières (CTNA-ACPF) today issued a call for immediate and substantive action from provincial and federal governments to dramatically increase commitments to restoring wildfire-impacted forests.

Speaking at the Western Forest Contractors Association (WFCA) Annual General Meeting and Conference, Rob Keen, RPF, Executive Director of the CTNA-ACPF, warned that more than 7.3 billion seedlings are required to restore just 15% of the forests destroyed by wildfires between 2023 and 2025—more than 10 times Canada’s current annual seedling production capacity.

Canada’s Forests Destroyed by Wildfires for 2023, 2024 and 2025

Province	2023	2024	2025	Total Forests Destroyed (Ha)	Area Requiring Restoring (%)	Area Requiring Planting (Ha)	Planting Density	Required Seedlings
Quebec	5,200,000	249,649	8,293	5,457,942	15%	818,691	1,800	1,473,644,340
BC	2,840,545	1,080,000	886,419	4,806,964	15%	721,045	1,500	1,081,566,900
NWT	4,160,000	1,690,000	1,385,271	7,235,271	15%	1,085,291	1,500	1,627,935,975
Alberta	2,200,000	714,874	676,252	3,591,126	15%	538,669	1,600	861,870,240
Sask	1,850,829	933,983	3,032,774	5,817,586	15%	872,638	1,500	1,308,956,850
Ontario	441,473	89,841	599,194	1,130,508	15%	169,576	1,400	237,406,680
Yukon	220,000	205,772	169,217	594,989	15%	89,248	1,500	133,872,525
Manitoba	198,633	275,920	2,169,092	2,643,645	15%	396,547	1,500	594,820,193
New Brunswick	856	233	4,059	5,148	15%	772	1,500	1,158,300
NFLD	21,883	72,432	20,303	114,618	15%	17,193	1,500	25,788,983
PEI	8	-	15	23	15%	3.5	1,500	5,175
Nova Scotia	25,096	48	8,646	33,790	15%	5,069	1,500	7,602,750
Total	17,159,323	5,312,752	8,959,535	31,431,610	15%	4,714,742		7,354,628,910

as of Nov 13, 2025

<https://cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/>

“The crisis is compounded by a troubling biological trend—the declining ability of forests to regenerate naturally after more frequent and higher-intensity wildfires,” said Keen. “We are seeing a significant reduction in natural regeneration following these fires. Without a massive, coordinated planting effort, we risk losing public assets, biodiversity, and the carbon sequestration benefits these forests provide for generations.”

A Sector at a Crossroads

Despite rapidly escalating need, restoration efforts are being undermined by funding instability and declining production capacity. In British Columbia, seedling production is projected to fall from 300 million in 2024 to 226 million by 2026. Quebec’s annual planting is projected to decrease from 143 million seedlings in 2023 to 125 million by 2026. In Saskatchewan, recent fires have devastated production forests, yet no proactive restoration measures are currently in place. At the federal level, the Two Billion Trees Program, which previously supported restoration initiatives, has been dismantled.

“Planning and growing the right tree for the right site takes two to four years,” Keen explained. “Our sector depends on long-term, predictable commitments to sustain infrastructure and retain a skilled workforce. A multi-year biological process cannot be managed through stop-and-go funding cycles.”

The CTNA-ACPF Path Forward

To address this national emergency, the CTNA-ACPF is calling for the creation of a **National Post-Wildfire Forest Restoration Program** with the following objectives:

- **Establish a National Forest Restoration Task Team** bringing together regional, provincial, First Nation, and federal experts to coordinate a practical and regionally responsive recovery effort.
- **Bridge the growing natural regeneration gap** by applying the latest forest restoration science to identify areas where natural recovery is no longer viable.
- **Rapidly identify priority reforestation areas** to improve long-term climate resilience.
- **Coordinate restoration logistics**, including damage assessments, seed collection, nursery production, planting, and monitoring.
- **Foster Indigenous partnerships** that integrate traditional knowledge with western science to strengthen forest resilience.
- **Grant “Major Project” status** to large-scale reforestation initiatives through the Major Projects Office or other federal programs to ensure long-term stability and economic growth.

“Our nurseries are vital employers in rural Canada,” added Keen. “Strategic investment in forest restoration will not only protect climate goals but also generate thousands of jobs and support the long-term viability of the forest sector. Tree planting is not a discretionary program—it is a nation-building investment.”

The CTNA-ACPF is calling on the Prime Minister, Premiers, and Ministers responsible for forests to act now to secure the future of Canada’s Crown forests.

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About the CTNA-ACPF

The Canadian Tree Nursery Association—Association Canadienne des Pépinières Forestières represents **64 nurseries across Canada**, producing more than **95% of the nation’s forest restoration seedlings**—over **720 million annually**. Formed in 2023, it is the sole national voice for Canada’s forest nursery sector.

According to *The Economic Value of Canada’s Tree Nursery Sector* report, the sector generates **\$256.3 million in annual revenue**, contributes **\$535.4 million to Canada’s GDP**, and supports **4,378 full-time equivalent jobs**, primarily in rural communities. As wildfire impacts intensify, these figures underscore the critical role tree nurseries play in forest restoration, ecological sustainability, and rural economic resilience.