



Media Release

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Regrowing Victoria's State forests

Every year hundreds of millions of eucalyptus seeds are spread across Victoria's State forests.

The seeds are used to regrow areas that have been harvested to supply wood to Victoria's timber industry.

Lachlan Spencer, VicForests General Manager Stakeholders and Planning said that helicopters aerially spread seeds over larger areas and smaller areas are sown by hand.

"We sow the seeds using GPS technology as it gives us a higher chance of successfully regrowing the forest.

"In areas smaller than five hectares it is more accurate to sow the seeds by hand," he said.

When an area has been harvested it undergoes a regeneration burn before being re-sown. This gives the seeds the best possible chance to grow.

"The burns mimic the process of nature and create a natural ash bed to germinate the seeds," Mr Spencer said.

"Some species, such as the Alpine Ash, are sown just before or in the snow as they require natural winter conditions in order to germinate," he said.

VicForests holds Victoria's largest store of eucalyptus seeds. These seeds not only re-grow harvested areas but are also used to re-grow other areas which have been affected by bushfires.

"Before an area is harvested, our planners survey the area and collect seeds from native trees so when that area is seeded it will have the best chance of returning to its natural state," Mr Spencer said.

VicForests has 17 tonnes of seed in storage and just one kilogram of seed contains 250 000 potential trees.

VicForests has spread approximately 377 million seeds across 2 273 hectares this year.

"The way we grow trees replicates that which happens in nature," Mr Spencer said.

"It is a survival of the fittest process whereby natural selection occurs and of the 200,000 seeds sown per hectare only 10 000 seedlings might germinate.

"In another 50 to 60 years there will be around 300 trees per hectare left as part of the growing forest," he said.



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VicForests conducts a regeneration survey to test the success of the regrowth 18 months after seeding, if it is successful it's handed back to the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP).

DELWP will manage that area of forest until it matures over 50 to 60 years and will eventually hand it back to VicForests to begin the process again.

Regeneration is a vital component of VicForests operations that sustains forests for future generations and meets the demand for locally sourced timber products.

VicForests is Australia's largest supplier of native forest hardwood timber and it is important to the industry that we regrow all areas in order to continue to produce the same quality products.

Much of the timber from VicForests' operations is used in products such as high quality furniture, flooring and other building materials.