



Placerville Nursery

Eldorado National Forest

At its height the Forest Service Nursery System had 13 operational nurseries in the country. Today 6 nurseries remain in operation. The Placerville nursery, established in 1957, is the only federal nursery operational in California and currently provides around 4 million seedlings for reforestation efforts primarily on lands impacted by wildfire and insect activity.



General Information

The Placerville Nursery produces seedlings for the 18 national forests in the Pacific Southwest Region. Nursery clients place orders for their seedlings 1 to 2 years in advance of anticipated reforestation and restoration projects as seedlings must be adapted to the intended site. Appropriate seeds are collected to match elevations and climate in the area in which they will be planted.

Although the Placerville Nursery cannot sell seedlings directly to the public, the nursery in cooperation with the Eldorado Resource Conservation District, is able to provide seedlings to small non-industrial private landowners.

The nursery is also home to the Forest Service’s Pacific Southwest Regional Seedbank. Seeds of rare species which may be irreplaceable are stored for genetic conservation purposes. These seed storage freezers hold up to 70,000 pounds of seeds representing every national forest in California.

That is about 1 BILLION seeds!

Mission

- ◇ Collect and maintain seeds from desirable species and in appropriate seed zones.
- ◇ Provide containerized and bare root seedlings to restore deforested Forest Service lands. For example: the King Fire Restoration Project.
- ◇ Provide seedlings for restoration of other federal lands.

Tours

The Placerville Nursery provides tours (when available) to the public. For information regarding scheduling tours or other questions please contact the Placerville Nursery office at 530-622-9600.

Did you Know?

In 1902, the first Forest Service Nursery to be opened was the Halsey Nursery in Nebraska to establish new forests where there was no previous tree cover.

The Nebraska National Forest was a grassland until the trees were planted by the Forest Service. It is the only “manufactured” forest in the National Forest System.





Containerized seedlings have become more popular in the last 15 years. Although they are more expensive to produce as bare root seedlings, survivability is usually increased with container grown stock.

History

Since the opening of the first Forest Service Nursery in the 1900's the objective was geared toward restoration. Providing seedlings to stabilize soils and protect watersheds after wildfires, as well as, restoring areas where indiscriminate logging took place before the Forest Service took control.

Federal nurseries provided work during the Great Depression mostly in the South by restoring cut over and farmed-out lands. From 1933 to the beginning of World War II, federal nurseries produced around 3 BILLION seedlings!

In 1957, the Placerville Nursery was established and provided help by producing up to 18 million seedlings annually in irrigated fields, on the nursery's 157 acres, which went towards replanting lands harvested to feed the postwar building boom.

The Nursery Today

Ponderosa pine, sugar pine and other native species growing at the nursery are helping to restore areas burned by wildfires or damaged by insects on Federal, State and other lands. Some trees are planted after green timber harvesting as well.

The work of the nursery each year includes:

- ◇ Cone collection
- ◇ Seed processing and inventory
- ◇ Sowing seeds in greenhouses, shade houses and in the fields
- ◇ Irrigation, thinning, and weeding out seedlings
- ◇ Lift, grading, and pack operations to harvest seedlings and deliver orders

What does the Nursery Tour consist of?

The Nursery Tour is a one hour tour of the nursery facilities. There are 10 buildings in total which include: a 3,000 square foot greenhouse and three seedling coolers (which are as big as a two story house). As you walk through the facilities your guide will tell you about nursery operations, the history of nurseries, and the steps on how a seedling is developed.

Volunteer Opportunity

If you are interested in volunteering at the nursery, contact Gary Cline, Nursery Manager, at 530-622-9600 ext. 5040.

Directions

From Highway 50, exit on Schnell School road and turn right on Carson road at the intersection. Follow Carson road for 3.0 miles and you will turn left on North Canyon road. Make another left turn shortly after onto Fruitridge road. Stay on Fruitridge road for half a mile and you will find the Placerville Nursery on your right.



Contact Information

Placerville Nursery
2375 Fruitridge Road
Camino, CA 95709
530-622-9600 ext. 5021
Open: Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm