



Timber Talks



Prepared by V. H. Phelps, Forest Research Laboratory, 506 W. Burnside Road, Victoria, B.C.

SAVE YOUR DOUGLAS FIR SEED

No. 3

Sound forest management implies restocking unproductive lands with desirable tree species, and this requires an adequate supply of seed. Years when the seed crop is heavy are infrequent and seed that is produced should be protected.

Numerous insects destroy seed within the cone, resulting in a loss that may range from 25 to 75 per cent of the crop and in some instances even a total loss. Destruction of Douglas fir seed by insects is mainly attributed to the Douglas fir cone-moth, fir cone-worm, cone midge, scale midge and the seed chalcid. The life history and feeding habits of these insects was investigated as a basis for their control. Behavioural patterns of attack varied but larval feeding of all insects occurred mostly during June and July.

Chemical spraying will effectively reduce the loss from these seed-destroying insects. The success and economic feasibility of the program of control is related to the extent, time and method of spraying. Although size of cone crop and degree of infestation in previous years are helpful in deciding when to initiate a control program, a more reliable way is by examination of insect eggs at the time the young cones are closing and turning down. Time of spraying is important and should be done before damage becomes serious, but not too early that late emergent insects are missed. Several chemicals have proven to be effective control agents. Spraying an aqueous solution of Meta-Systox-R with a mist-blower or hydraulic sprayer is recommended. Precautionary measures must be taken when mixing and applying chemicals to ensure protection of the operator.