

Grand Fir Seeds available from Idaho Seed Orchard

by Tom Leege

In October, 2010, the Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association (IECTA) harvested cones for the second time from their grand fir (*Abies grandis*) seed orchard near Sandpoint, ID. The 19 trees in the orchard were originally selected from the best performers of the Sears Creek seedlings, a strain that ranked highest in a provenance study to determine the best grand fir seed among 22 strains in the Northwest. The seed trees are now about 40 years old and 60-70 ft. high.



About 26 pounds of seed was obtained from the cones when they were processed by Silvaseed Corp., in Roy, WA. A seed analysis at Oregon State University estimated 18,700 seeds per pound and a germination rate of 58 percent. It was decided at the spring meeting of IECTA that we had more than enough seed for our membership for a few years. Therefore, a motion was passed that we sell up to 10 pounds of the seed at \$200./pound to help pay the expenses incurred in making the collection.

Last fall, IECTA contracted State University to conduct a study on the needle retention quality of the seed orchard trees. Four boughs from each of the 19 trees were sent to Dr. Gary Chastagner at Puyallup, Wash. on Oct. 7, 2010. In January we received a final report indicating that 14 of the trees had excellent needle retention and the other 5 were only slightly below excellent. Dr. Chastagner commented that it was unusual in his experience to see such a small variation in needle retention among trees that were sampled

so early in the fall. Since grand fir are not noted for their needle retention quality, we were excited to see the excellent results regarding our seed orchard trees.

If anyone would like to order any seed, and we are only making it available in 1 pound quantities, please contact me at: tleege@frontier.com. Or phone 208-664-3725. The amount would be \$200./pound, postage included.