



Rooted in Resilience:

Growing in Challenging Times

**43rd Annual General Meeting of the Forest
Nursery Association of BC**

Mary Winspear Centre

Sidney, BC

September 23 - 25, 2025

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Annual General Meeting of the
Forest Nursery Association of BC

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Forest Nursery Association of BC

Agenda

Rooted in Resilience: Growing in Challenging Times



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
12:00 - 6:00	Supplier setup
1:00 - 4:00	Informal Nursery Tours: Saanich Forestry Centre & Arbutus Grove Nursery
2:15 - 5:30	Golf Tournament - Ardmore Golf Course
6:00 - 10:00	Registration & Trade Show



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:00 - 8:15	Full Breakfast, Registration and Trade Show
8:15 - 8:30	Welcome & Opening Remarks FNABC President Christina Lavoie; First Nations representative Elder May Sam; Town of Sidney Councillor Sara Duncan
8:30 - 9:30	CTNA Forest Nursery & WFCA Silviculture Training Programs John Betts, Western Forestry Contractors Association Rob Keen, Canadian Tree Nursery Association
9:30 - 10:00	Restoring Balance Through Indigenous Leadership in Forestry Percy Guichon, Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation Ltd.
10:00 - 10:30	Coffee Break & Trade Show
10:30 - 11:00	Safety Talk –Risk & Communication and Greenhouse Safety Melissa LaCroix, AgSafe BC
11:00 -11:30	Maximizing Conifer Seed Germination in the Nursery Dave Kolotelo, Tree Seed Centre, Ministry of Forests
11:30 - 12:00	Trichoderma Biocontrol for Fusarium Root Rot on Douglas-fir Seedlings Nico Feau, Pacific Forestry Centre, Canadian Forest Service
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch & Trade Show
1:00 - 2:00	Growing Media for Growing Trees: Properties, Products, and Possibilities Brian Jackson, North Carolina State University – ZOOM
2:00 - 2:30	Botrytis, Sirococcus, and Fusarium management in northwest container nurseries - Paul Rhoades RNGR USDA Forest Service - ZOOM
2:30 - 3:00	Coffee Break & Trade Show
3:00 - 3:30	Sirococcus Screening Trial and Pesticide Updates Mario Lanthier, CropHealth Advising & Research
3:30 - 4:00	BCTS Nursery Services Updates Kona Van Diest, Nursery Services, BC Timber Sales

4:00 - 5:00	AGM Business Meeting
5:00 - 6:00	Cash Bar & Trade Show
6:00 - 10:30	Banquet & Entertainment Chief Forester's Award (412A Ss) Green Timbers Award Entertainment: David Gogo (Juno Nominee) Mood Beach – DJ session



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:00 AM - 8:15	Full Breakfast, Registration & Trade Show
8:15 AM - 8:30	Opening Remarks & Updates
8:30 AM - 9:00	Seedling Nutrition 101 Barbara Hawkins, University of Victoria
9:00 AM - 9:30	Realistic LED Lighting Applications Nabil Khadduri, Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources
9:30 AM - 10:00	Nursery Assets Tracking Using Radio Frequency Tags (RFIDS) Pablo Crespell-Montero, College of New Caledonia
10:00 AM - 10:30	Coffee Break & Trade Show
10:30 AM - 11:00	High Tunnel Greenhouses - Corenthin (Felix) Chassouant - Harnois - ZOOM
11:00 AM - 12:00	Production of Native Plants & Gene Conservation - Seed Collection - Operational and Research, Gene Conservation, and Native Plants: Don Pigott, Yellow Point Propagation - Conservation/Species Adaptation - Haley Tumas, Forest Genetics, MOF - Nursery Q&A session - Mesachie Lake, MOF; Sylvan Vale Nursery; Western Forest Products Nursery
12:00 PM - 12:30	Prize Passports & Conference Wrap-up
12:30 PM - 5:00	TOURS: Applied Bionomics Nutrition Break Pacific Forestry Centre

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH

8:30 - 9:30 CTNA Forest Nursery & WFC Silviculture Training Programs

John Betts

BIOGRAPHY

John Betts is the Executive Director of the Western Forestry Contractors' Association. Prior to taking this position in 1994 he had worked as a Frontier College labourer teacher, set chokers logging on the West Coast, planted trees in Ontario (1968) and B.C., operated his own tree planting and silviculture firm for a decade, worked as a free-lance journalist, played centre for the Kaslo Klippers hockey team, reported for the Nelson Daily News, and played bodhran, tin whistle, bones and drums for the Argenta Old Time Dance Band. He now lives and works from his home in Queens Bay on Kootenay Lake with his wife Anneke where they raised two sons. In 2019 he was awarded an Honorary Membership in the Association of BC Forest Professionals for his contributions to forestry in British Columbia.

ABSTRACT

The main findings and progress of our Silviculture Sector Labour Market Information Report and Silviculture Labour Force Strategy. That will include a description of the human resource development support tools and occupational training under development to aid our forestry sector in recruiting and retaining workers. I will describe how these measures will prepare the forestry sector for the emergence of a restoration economy while supporting our governments' commitments to ecosystem health, public safety in the face of climate change effects, and economic development in rural regions. I will set these aspirations against the current political and economic crisis we see today.

8:30 - 9:30 CTNA Forest Nursery & WFC Silviculture Training Programs

Rob Keen

BIOGRAPHY

Rob Keen is a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and Executive Director of the Canadian Tree Nursery Association, established in 2023 to support Canadian tree nurseries' work in facilitating the nation's forest restoration efforts. Prior to establishing the Association, he served Trees Ontario for more than 20 years, first as a Consultant and later as CEO, overseeing its merger with the Ontario Forestry Association, and resulting in the formation of Forests Ontario in 2014. Throughout his career, Rob has championed the sustainability and stewardship of Canada's forests, including as a Director and Chair of the Algonquin Forestry Authority and as Director of the Invasive Species Centre, and is currently a Director of Maple Leaves Forever and Chair of the Sustainable Forest Licensee, Westwind Forest Stewardship Ltd. For his work, Rob received the Clean50 Lifetime Achievement Award in the fall of 2022 and the Forests Ontario Award in 2023.

ABSTRACT

Engagement with all governments to commit to long term support for forest restoration and the need to significantly address Canada's wildfire impacted forests and, an update on the Forest Nursery Training Program.

9:30 - 10:00 Restoring Balance Through Indigenous Leadership in Forestry
Percy Guichon - Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation Ltd.

BIOGRAPHY

Percy is the Chief Executive Officer of Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation Ltd. (CCR), a joint venture company owned by the T̓sideldel First Nation, the Tl'etinqox Government, and the Yunesit'in Government, and a Councillor of T̓sideldel First Nation. From a young age, Percy enjoyed being an active member of his community and learning about forestry. Percy attended the College of New Caledonia in Prince George and received a Forest Technician Diploma. He was able to merge both of his passions to build a meaningful career that has brought new opportunities to his community. With CCR, Percy acknowledges the challenges faced and attributes the company's achievements to perseverance, hard work, and the unwavering support of the community. His commitment to making a positive impact on the land and people is evident in CCR's recognized leadership in the forestry industry.

ABSTRACT

CCR's focus is to coordinate and implement large scale forestry programs and initiatives within its traditional territories to provide sustained economic opportunities for communities and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the traditional forest land-base. The organization is recognized as an innovative organization—a catalyst that creates new economic opportunities. As leaders in the forestry sector, CCR has a proven reliability to carry out large-scale forest rehabilitation work, with several forest rehabilitation projects underway. The team works to seamlessly integrate Indigenous wisdom into all projects, emphasizing cultural continuity and ecological stewardship, a strategic approach which aligns with CCR's commitment to resilience, cultural revitalization, and sustainable land management practices.

10:30 – 11:00 Communication and Greenhouse Safety
Melissa Lacroix - AgSafe BC

BIOGRAPHY

Melissa Lacroix is a strategic leader and governance professional dedicated to building safer, stronger communities across Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. As Vice Chair of Coastal Community Credit Union and a Regional Health and Safety Consultant with AgSafeBC, Melissa brings a unique blend of board governance expertise and hands-on safety leadership to every role she undertakes. She also leads her own health and safety consultancy, empowering organizations to create compliant, sustainable, and people-first workplaces. Melissa holds the prestigious ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors, has completed the CUDA Achievement Program, and graduated with distinction from the BCIT Health and Safety program. She manages a portfolio of over 600 active members and businesses across the region.

ABSTRACT

Passionate about governance excellence and workplace safety, Melissa combines strategic insight with practical solutions to drive meaningful impact. She resides in the Regional District of Nanaimo, serving communities throughout Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

11:00 – 11:30 Maximizing Conifer Seed Germination in the Nursery
Dave Kolotelo - Tree Seed Centre - Ministry of Forests

BIOGRAPHY

Dave has been working at the provincial Tree Seed Centre for the past 33 years conducting research and extension, assisting with tree seed problem solving, operational efficiency improvements and successfully avoiding management. Interested in tree seed science and technology and advocacy into investments in research, education and infrastructure to maintain and enhance these essential services at the global level. Enjoys gardening, travelling, hiking and beach volleyball.

ABSTRACT

The first step in seedling request processing is ensuring the correct amount of seed is being ordered – ensure your order is what will be sown. In conifers, germination is a relatively simple process, but it can be very energy intensive. The basic requirements for germination are the imbibition of adequate moisture to reactivate cellular metabolism and make energy available for germination. If seed dormancy is present then the next step is overcoming this dormancy which is accomplished by cold stratification in most conifers. Adequate moisture is critical to the success of cold stratification. Once dormancy has been overcome then the buildup of thermal units is the limiting factor. Details of these three essential components will be reviewed as well as a review of common germination problems faced.

11:30 – 12:00 Trichoderma Biocontrol for Fusarium Root Rot on Douglas-fir Seedlings
Nico Feau - Pacific Forestry Centre

BIOGRAPHY

I am a research scientist in forest pathology with the Canadian Forest Service at the Pacific Forestry Centre in Victoria, B.C since July 2021. I completed my PhD at the Université Laval in Québec and a post-doc at the INRA (French National Research Institute for Agriculture) of Bordeaux in France. Before joining Natural Resources Canada, I worked at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, as a Research Associate in Pr. Richard Hamelin's Forest pathology lab. I conducted studies in several tree-pathogen systems, from poplar rusts and cankers to blue stain fungi, tree root rot caused by water molds and oak powdery mildews. I developed a strong interest and expertise in the use of genomics and DNA-based tools to detect forest pathogens and get a better understanding of their mechanisms of emergence and interaction with trees. A significant part of my research program at CFS focuses on the early stages of the reforestation system, by ensuring that conifer seeds and seedlings will be resilient to pathogens in the context of climate change. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family and sharing my passion for mountains and outdoor activities with my 8-year-old son.

ABSTRACT

Reforestation as a climate change mitigation strategy is a driving force behind much of my research program. Local reforestation efforts depend on extensive seedling production systems that deliver improved gains, including enhanced growth and adaptation to future climates. However, these efforts are threatened by seed-borne pathogens that compromise the significant investments made in seed selection and seedling production. In recent years, my group has investigated the functional diversity of seed-borne fungi in over 6,000 conifer seeds, identifying both pathogens that cause disease and potentially beneficial fungi that may support seedling health. Among the “beneficials”, two highly competitive strains of *Trichoderma* isolated from Douglas-fir seeds have emerged as promising candidates. As natural associates of Douglas-fir, these strains are pre-adapted to the host and may provide stronger, more stable establishment and long-term pest control compared to generic biocontrol agents. In this presentation, I will describe how experimental mycology combined with genomic and chemistry technologies is being used to assess the potential of these strains as operational biocontrol agents. I will also share results from a pilot nursery assay benchmarking them against the commercial strain *T.harzianum* T22. The use of these Douglas-fir-adapted *Trichoderma* strains represents an innovative and practical solution to mitigate the impacts of seed-borne pathogens during the critical early stages of seedling development.

1:00 - 2:00 Growing Media for Growing Trees: Properties, Products, and Possibilities **Brian Jackson - North Carolina State University**

BIOGRAPHY

Brian is a Professor of Horticulture and Director of the Horticultural Substrates Laboratory at NC State University. Brian has studied and researched soilless substrates for horticultural crop production systems since 2003 with an emphasis on designing and characterizing engineered wood and bark materials. In addition to being a leading global expert in the engineering and use of wood substrate materials, Brian is also heavily involved in national and global substrate initiatives, advocacy groups, substrate manufacturer consultations, and multi-disciplinary scientific collaborations.

ABSTRACT

This presentation will summarize the tree seedling industry's progress towards soilless cultivation, the interest/shift to non-peat alternatives, and the research and development activities that are on-going around the globe. Specific topics of discussion will include the status of peat in horticulture, new media products on the market, basic physical and chemical properties of substrates, matching container type with substrates for optimized air, water, and drainage during production.

2:00 – 2:30 Botrytis, Sirococcus, and Fusarium Management in Northwest Container Nurseries

Paul Rhoades - RNGR, Athens, Georgia

BIOGRAPHY

Paul has worked in plant production, plant ecology, and plant-insect interactions for over 15 years. He worked as a greenhouse manager at the University of Tennessee before moving into research studying plant-insect interactions at the University of Tennessee and the University of Idaho. Following that, Paul worked for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture in several program areas including invasive species, phytosanitary security, and nursery inspection. Most of his time at that agency was spent advising nurseries and plant producers on export requirements, certifying pest-free status of plant shipments, and working with local nurseries to limit pest issues.

ABSTRACT

TBD

3:00 - 3:30 Sirococcus Screening Trial and Pesticide Updates

Mario Lanthier - CropHealth Advising & Research

BIOGRAPHY

Mario has worked in the industry for many years. His company, based in Kelowna, offers services related to Integrated Pest Management throughout British Columbia and Alberta. He has directed research projects for years in seed orchards and seedling nurseries to generate new registrations for the important pest problems in the industry. Depending on the day, Mario is an arborist, a horticulturist, an agronomist, a bugologist or a friend of soil microbes. Want to hear about the pheromones that tree borers are using ? It is fascinating.

ABSTRACT

A trial was conducted this year to verify efficacy of various fungicides for management of Sirococcus disease in Lodgepole pine. Results are promising with 3 products providing excellent control. We have also gathered excellent photography of the various stages of plant infection and information on disease activity through the summer. Funding was provided by BC Timber Sales with support from the industry.

3:30 - 4:00 BCTS Nursery Services Updates

Kona Van Diest – Coastal Seedling Representative, BC Timber Sales MOF

BIOGRAPHY

Kona Van Diest is a Registered Professional Forester with over three decades of experience in silviculture and forestry operations. For the past ten years, she has served as the Coastal Seedling Representative for BC Timber Sales (BCTS), where she manages seedling contracts for government funded projects and seed supply for BCTS . In this role, she has been instrumental in modernizing BCTS Seedling Services, leading the transition from manual processes to digital systems that significantly reduce data entry and improve operational efficiency. Kona is a passionate advocate for sustainable practices in forestry. Seedlings Services most recent initiatives have focused on advancing BCTS's green objectives, including implementing box recycling programs, promoting the use of biodiesel in transportation, and reducing plastic waste by eliminating bundle wrap for select seedling species. Prior to her work with BCTS, Kona spent 20 years as a silviculture contractor. Her long-standing career has given her a front-row seat to the evolution of forestry practices in British Columbia, and she continues to champion innovation and environmental responsibility within the sector.

ABSTRACT

Nursery Services Updates from BCTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH

8:30 - 9:00 Seedling Nutrition 101

Barbara Hawkins - University of Victoria

BIOGRAPHY

In Canada's forests, low nutrient availability is common, yet trees survive and thrive for centuries. A focus of research in my group is tree nutrient uptake and allocation. We are particularly interested in co-adaptation of conifers and their mycorrhizal partners, and in variation among tree populations in stress tolerance. Our work ranges from lab experiments measuring nutrient uptake with microelectrodes, to field work assessing nutrient stoichiometry of tree foliage, fungi and soil. I obtained a BSF in Forest Management at UBC many years ago and worked in silviculture in Mackenzie, B.C. From there, I went to the School of Forestry in Christchurch, New Zealand for my PhD, and then to the Centre for Forest Biology at the University of Victoria, where I have been a faculty member for 35 years.

ABSTRACT

TBD

9:00 - 9:30 Realistic LED Lighting Applications

Nabil Khadduri - US Forest Service

BIOGRAPHY

Following a one year "sabbatical" with the US Forest Service as western nursery specialist, Nabil is back in his previous nursery scientist role at the state of Washington DNR Webster Nursery. He enjoys engaging in applied research and working in an operational setting. Outside of work he continues musical pursuits, including performing Irish music at local pubs and playing clarinet in a dance band.

ABSTRACT

This presentation will focus on LED conversion strategies from existing high pressure sodium lighting for photoperiod extension or interruption. I'll start off with a quick review of the basics of LED lighting and current research from the horticulture industry, including practical light meters and minimum lighting needs. I'll provide some cost breakdowns and pros and cons of beam flicker retrofitting, string lighting, and top lighting. I'll address the challenges of supplemental photosynthetic lighting for our crops, and finish with potential uses for far-red specific lighting for conifer nurseries.

9:30 – 10:00 Nursery Assets Tracking Using Radio Frequency Tags (RFIDS)

Pablo Crespell-Montero, College of New Caledonia

BIOGRPAHY

Pablo is an experienced forest researcher and analyst, passionate about innovation and knowledge transfer. With eight years as Senior Researcher with the Markets & Economics Group, Department of Building Systems at FPInnovations, Vancouver, he specialized in market research on tall buildings and biomaterials, with an emphasis on mass timbers. He introduced a novel research methodology, pooling construction stats, wood use factors and construction costs to build powerful analytical tools. His graduate research studied the effect of innovativeness and work climate on the financial performance of forest firms using multivariate analysis on survey data. As a forester, tree breeder, and leader of the Bioinformatics Unit at Arauco/Bioforest he led multiple technological projects and app development involving GIS, data science, project portfolio management, and knowledge transfer. As an Assistant Professor at Universidad de Chile, he taught/researched Industrial Processes and Life Cycle Assessment.

He currently works as a Research Fellow with the Applied Research & Innovation Office and the Research Forest at CNC leading research in forestry and wood products.

His interests include reading, hiking, and his family (Carmen, Anita, and Paula).

ABSTRACT

Pablo is responsible for collaborating with potential partners to design applied research project solutions in the areas of wood products innovation and forestry technology.

10:30 - 11:00 High Tunnel Greenhouses

Corenthin (Felix) Chassouant – Harnois

BIOGRAPHY

Felix Chassouant is VP of Sales at Harnois Greenhouses. And is a passionate agronomist. Felix holds a Master of Science degree in agricultural sciences from both France and Canada. During his studies, he took a gap-year working in Australia across more than 20 organic farms to learn and visit the country. With more a decade of dedicated involvement in the greenhouse sector, including five years in South-East Asia representing a European company, Felix brings a wealth of international experience to his role in North America working now for Harnois Greenhouses, a major Canadian greenhouse manufacturer. His comprehensive understanding of the industry, coupled with his scientific expertise, equips him to effectively assist greenhouse growers and provide strategic guidance towards optimal solutions. He is also active during his time off managing a well known blog in the greenhouse industry called [Horti-Generation](#)

ABSTRACT

TBD

11:00 – 12:00 Production of Native Plants & Gene Conservation

Seed Collection - Operational and Research, Gene Conservation, and Native Plants Don Pigott - Yellow Point Propagation

BIOGRAPHY

Don Pigott graduated from Selkirk College with a diploma in Forestry in 1969. He worked for a short time in forest engineering before beginning a career at MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. He held a variety of positions during his 13 years in the Forest Research Department at MacMillan Bloedel, where his responsibilities included seed supply for their reforestation program, establishment of their seed orchards, and supervision of their operational tree improvement program. In 1977 he spent one year in Norway working for the Norwegian Forest Research Institute as part of an exchange program. In 1982 he founded Yellow Point Propagation Ltd., a private silvicultural company providing a variety of services to the forest industry in British Columbia, other parts of Canada, the United States, and other countries. Yellow Point Propagation has also been involved in cooperative research projects with research organizations in several European countries, China and Chile. The company harvests tree seed from native populations, and since 1982, the company has been active in all aspects of tree improvement, including the selection, testing, and breeding of parent trees; collection of seeds and vegetative material for provenance testing; and project management of all aspects of orchard and research trial establishment, for both the Ministry of Forests and forest companies. Don has co-produced numerous publications, including, "Seed Orchards in British Columbia – Historical and Projected Production." For the past 17 years Yellow Point Propagation has also been working on gene conservation projects with whitebark pine, limber pine, alpine larch and several other species. He was Coastal Silviculturist of the year in 2012, and made honorary life member of the ABCFP in 2017.

ABSTRACT

I have been involved in all facets of seed collection, provenance research, Gene Conservation, and native plant collections for all of my 43 years as a private consultant. My talk will highlight the first three, but I will also attempt to address the opportunities for collection and nursery production of native plant seeds.

Conservation/Species Adaptation Hayley Tumas - Research Scientist - Ministry of Forests

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Hayley Tumas is a research scientist with the Ministry of Forests working on tree breeding and genetic conservation. She has a BS in Biology from the University of Maryland and a PhD in Forestry and Natural Resources from the University of Georgia. Her work in conservation genetics has taken her across countries, systems, and species, from salt marshes in the Gulf

of Mexico to commercial forestry in the UK. She landed in BC in 2020 for a postdoc with Sally Aitken at UBC examining landscape-level genetic diversity in BC reforestation. While continuing this work in her role with MoF, she is also working on breeding and conservation programs for some of BC's native species including hemlock, whitebark pine, and Garry oak.

ABSTRACT

As climate change and land development progress, BC is dedicated to adequately conserving its native tree species. The majority of our trees can be conserved using a combination of in situ and ex situ conservation that utilizes the BEC system to account for local adaptation. Some species present unique problems that require innovative conservation strategies. Whitebark pine and Oregon ash are threatened by pests and pathogens, and will need resistance seed to be developed to be sufficiently conserved. Garry oak habitat is vanishing and acorns cannot be stored long term so we must develop conservation plantings. Thanks to the expertise of MoF nursery staff these species conservation programs are thriving!