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Research Note

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SEED CROP PROSPECTS FOR 1951

By

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Abundance of winter flower buds, while not positive evidence, is at least a good indicator of next fall's seed crop. Management men can make good use of this information in working out their spring or early fall slash disposal program.

Just what do these flower buds look like in midwinter? The photographs attached will help answer this question for Douglas-fir. The pistillate (or female) flower buds that produce the cones are about twice as large as the others and usually occur just below the terminal vegetative bud on the tip of the twig. Sometimes additional vegetative buds occur just below the terminal and should not be mistaken for the larger flower buds. The staminate (or male) flowers that do the pollinating are clustered on the twig below the pistillate flower. None of the buds open until spring, but they are easily identified now. Most flower buds are found in the upper portion of the crown.

Buds of associate species other than pine vary from Douglas-fir in size and color, but all follow the same general pattern of occurrence. The pines, requiring 2 years to mature, will have the year-old cones on the tree if there is to be a crop in the fall.

Some localities have a heavy crop of flower buds this winter. A late fall burn consumes most of the seed crop and leaves an unfavorable seed bed for next year's seedlings (see Research Note No. 56). Therefore, if there is a prospective seed crop for 1951 in your locality, try to prepare for it by cleaning up slash in the spring if possible, or as early in the fall as is consistent with safe burning.

Double Actual Size

Actual Size

The above photographs of Douglas-fir twigs show the terminal vegetative bud and the pistillate (or female) flower buds just below. Under these the staminate (or male) flowers are clustered on the twig.