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Abstract

Ectomycorrhizae and forestry in British Columbia: A summary of current research and conservation strategies

Alan Wiensczyk, Sharmin Gamiet, Daniel Durall, Melanie Jones, Suzanne Simard

Ectomycorrhizae are fungus-root associations that comprise the feeder roots of most commercially important conifers in British Columbia. A large body of research has been conducted on ectomycorrhizae as they relate to forestry in the province; however, much of this information is scattered and is generally of a highly technical nature.

This extension note summarizes the latest research on ectomycorrhizae, including information on the role that ectomycorrhizal fungi play in forest ecosystems. The authors discuss several helpful forest management practices that can maintain a diverse community of ectomycorrhizal fungi across the landscape. These include: retaining refuge plants, mature trees, and old-growth forests; retaining the forest floor during harvest and mechanical site preparation; avoiding high-intensity broadcast burns; minimizing the effects of species shifts, particularly following grass seeding; maintaining the edge-to-area ratio of harvested areas within certain limits; planting a mixture of tree species soon after harvest; retaining coarse woody debris; and managing for the fruiting bodies formed by ectomycorrhizal fungi, including edible mushrooms and truffles, fungi species used by wildlife, and rare and endemic species.

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