

Sequoia planting project could create second old-growth

By Jim Gardner, San Francisco Business Times

If a giant coast redwood falls in the forest, there's a good chance Dave Milarch would hear it.

The beefy, Camel-smoking fourth-generation Michigan tree nurseryman is on a mission to clone the world's oldest, largest trees. He's now turned his attention to the gigantic Sequoias that dot northern California and southern Oregon, with hopes of reseeding a new generation of redwood forest.

Collecting tree DNA is not just a science project for Milarch, who has made presentations to a group of NASA scientists and, earlier this month, to opinion leaders at a TEDx event in Mountain View. Although his nonprofit, Archangel Ancient Tree Archive, has cloned 50 other species, the 300-foot-plus, 3,000-year-old coast redwoods are key, he said, to cleaning the air – and thus stopping many human diseases.

"These big trees trump anything, everything," he said.

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