

# Sugar pines need assistance to thrive in Sierra Nevada

By Maria Mircheva

As you may know, sugar pines and other white pines are plagued by a nonnative invasive pathogen. White pine blister rust kills about 90 percent of sugar pines it infects. Scientists and restoration managers have agreed that the only effective restoration strategy is to identify seed trees resistant to the rust and plant their progeny.

That is exactly what the Sugar Pine Foundation does and you can help too. Last fall, a volunteer described planting sugar pines as “creating life in our neck of the woods”.

For all of you that have been inspired by the recent release of Dr. Seuss “The Lorax,” this will be the perfect opportunity to turn that inspiration into action and do your part in bringing back the Sugar Pines. The Sugar Pine Foundation has 4,000 young sugar pines to plant in Tahoe this spring.

On the South Shore, there will be two community plantings. The first one is April 28 at Bijou Community Park. There will be a morning group starting at 11:30 and an afternoon group about 2. The second planting is May 5 at 10am in Glenbrook.

May 5 is also Climate Impact Day, so the planting will be a part of Connect the Dots campaign. You can also buy a sugar pine to plant in your yard at one of the SPF events or on our website.

There will be another planting May 12 from 10am-1pm at Waddle Ranch in Truckee. Meet at the Truckee Airport parking lot. Bring a 4WD vehicle or ride in the airport van to the planting site.

The SPF's spring planting blitz begins in late April goes into mid-May. During this time of the year, the soil is naturally moistened from snowmelt and conditions are ideal for giving young seedlings a good start. However, this year our snowpack is below average, which means it will be harder for the seedlings to survive.

If you can't make it to a planting, maybe you can volunteer as a caregiver to one of the restoration sites and bring the trees some much needed water in the dry summer months.

The goal of the SPF is to help save Tahoe's glorious sugar pines by planting blister rust-resistant seedlings throughout the Tahoe area.

We like to involve local students and community members in our restoration work and teach them about forest health. We aim to inspire them to become forest stewards.

This spring, 20 Lake Tahoe Community College and 50 Sierra Nevada College students will be planting with the Sugar Pine Foundation as well.

Since 2008, the foundation has planted more than 700 acres with more than 42,000 sugar pines and other native trees to maintain Tahoe's legacy of beautiful, healthy forests. We need your help to reach our goal of planting 50,000 sugar pines in five years!

For more information, call me at (650) 814.9565 or email [admin@sugarpinefoundation.org](mailto:admin@sugarpinefoundation.org).

*Maria Mircheva is executive director of the Sugar Pine Foundation.*