

Climate cracks showing in Nev. pine nut harvest

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

BAKER – Along a dirt road just north of Great Basin National Park, Dayer LeBaron plucks a cone from a pinyon tree and shakes its contents into his calloused hand.

The pine nuts almost shine in their varnished, dark-brown husks, but all he can see is their size. These are Nevada soft-shelled pine nuts; they're supposed to be bigger than this.

“There’s definitely something going on,” says LeBaron, a commercial harvester from El Paso, Texas. “Being in these mountains for 40 years, I’ve seen it with my own eyes. I know something’s going on.”

But the work isn’t easy, and the yields aren’t what they used to be. All it takes is an insect invasion or a sudden change in the weather to turn a good year bad. LeBaron says he’s been seeing more of both lately, something he blames on climate change.

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