

# GE Trees

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**June 9, 2009: Dangerous Genetically Engineered (GE) Eucalyptus Trees on Fast-Track to Large-Scale Release in the U.S.**

**Take Action**

Tell the USDA NOWAY to ArborGen's Eucalyptus Frankentrees. **Deadline July 6, 2009.**

**Groups can sign the comments to the USDA prepared by the STOP GE Trees Campaign.**

[Click here to sign the comments.](http://www.globaljusticeecology.org/petition.php?target=_self)

**Groups can sign on to the demand in Canada to ban GE trees:**

[Click here to sign on](http://www.cban.ca/Action/Stop-GE-Trees-Sign-On?target=_self)

In an unprecedented move toward commercial large-scale release of GE forest trees in the United States, GE tree giant ArborGen is petitioning the U.S. government to be allowed to plant an estimated 260,000 flowering GE eucalyptus trees across seven southern U.S. states on 330 acres in so-called "field trials."

The mass-planting of 260,000 flowering GE eucalyptus trees is a major step toward the unregulated development of large-

scale GE eucalyptus plantations in the U.S. ArborGen has already requested permission for the commercial planting of GE cold-tolerant eucalyptus clones across the U.S. South. The U.S. government is expected to issue their decision on this later this year.

U.S. government approval of GE eucalyptus trees will set a dangerous precedent to allow other experimental GE forest trees, including poplar and pine, that would inevitably and irreversibly contaminate native trees with destructive GE traits, devastating forest ecosystems and wildlife. Once GE trees escape, there is no way to call them back.

The only way to stop genetic contamination of native forests is to ban the commercial release of GE trees before it is too late.

**Groups can sign on to the demand to ban GE trees:**

[Take Action/Stop-GE-Trees-Sign-On?target=\\_self](#)

[Click here to sign on](#)

47 groups signed the letter to the Government of Canada with the following demands:

[Click here to see the full letter](#)

[Click here to see the full letter](http://www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/GE-Trees/Letter-signed-by-47-organizations-May-2008?target=_self)

[Click here to just view the list of 47 groups.](#)

For the health and future of Canada's forest ecosystems and those around the world:

1. We, the undersigned, ask for an end to existing field trials in Canada and an end to approvals for field trials of genetically engineered trees in Canada.

2. We ask for an end to the use of public funds for field-testing and an end to field-testing at government research stations.
3. We call upon the Canadian Government to support a global moratorium on field testing, planting and commercial use of genetically engineered trees because of the serious risks they pose to biological diversity and to forest ecosystems in Canada and across the world.

**Sign on here.**

**Background**

**Field Trials in Canada:**

In Canada, there have been only one or two field trials in any given year since 1997.

Since 2000, open-air field tests have only been carried out by government researchers at the Canadian Forest Service, not by private companies.

Currently (2008) there is only one open-air trial in Canada, on a genetically engineered poplar, at the Laurentian Forestry Centre in Quebec.

**Genetically Engineered Trees: Basic Background**

**GE Trees, Cellulosic Biofuels & Destruction of Forest Biological Diversity**

Feb 2008 (pdf 10 pages)

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Dr. David Suzuki

**Provincial Opposition:**

**In Alberta:** The Alberta Forest Genetic Resources Council does not recommend the use of GMOs for reforestation at this time?

**In British Columbia:** The Ministry of Forests and Range has ensured that no genetically modified tree seed has been registered or used on crown land.

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The Canadian Forest Service is conducting field trials of GE poplar in Quebec? trials that may already pose a contamination threat to Canadian forests. Even without these trials, the field trial is currently underway in the United States could pose a significant threat to Canadian forest ecosystems. This is one reason why CBAN collaborates closely with our colleagues in the US.

GE trees pose a greater threat of contamination than seen with GE crops, largely because trees live for decades, have so many nearby wild relatives and their pollen travel hundreds of miles. This scenario of contamination from trees genetically engineered to be insect resistance via Bt (as in recent government field trials in Quebec), for example, warns of serious biodiversity impacts as Bt targets lepidoptera, a main food source for many birds.

Natural Resources Canada is discussing the use of Terminator technology? (genetically engineered sterile seed technology) to contain genetic pollution from GE trees. This raises a new level of concerns since Terminator would not function 100% but would create new risks from the spread of Terminator genes and sterility traits, for example.

<http://www.banterminator.org/> (Natural Resources Canada is discussing the use of Terminator technology? (genetically engineered sterile seed technology) to contain genetic pollution from GE trees. This raises a new level of concerns since Terminator would not function 100% but would create new risks from the spread of Terminator genes and sterility traits, for example.)

**Report from the UN Meeting May 2008**

Governments at the UN meeting in May 2008 failed to ban GE trees

<http://cban.ca/Resources/Topics/GE-Trees/Blog> You can read the CBAN Daily Blog from the UN meeting in Germany to find out what exactly happened

<http://cban.ca/Press/Press-Releases/Canada-Tries-to-Eliminate-Moratorium-Request-on-Genetically-Engineered-Trees> Press Release from May 22: Canada Tries to Eliminate Moratorium Request on GE Trees

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity could have established an international moratorium on the field testing and commercial release of GE trees at the major COP9 meeting May 19-30 in Germany. But Canada, Brazil, and Colombia, with Australia and New Zealand worked against this proposal from African countries.

CBAN joined with international partners to present the potential negative impacts of GE trees.

- [Click here to read the CBAN briefing to the United Nations meeting. \(6 pages\)](/Resources/Topics/GE-Trees/Potential-Impacts-of-Genetically-Engineered-Trees)
- This briefing is a critique of [the background document prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. \(17 pages\)](/Resources/Topics/GE-Trees/Background-document-to-the-in-depth-review-of-the-forest-programme-of-work)
- CBAN has also signed the [international open letter demanding a ban on genetically engineered \(GE\) trees.](/Resources/Topics/GE-Trees/SBSTTA-WRM-Open-Letter-to-Stop-GE-Trees)

CBAN is a Steering Committee Member of the North American [Stop GE Trees Campaign](http://www.stopgetrees.org/staticpages/index.php?page=2004081) and is working with colleagues across the world in the call for [a ban on GE trees.](http://www.stopgetrees.org/staticpages/index.php?page=2004081)

**Articles**

- [Frankenforests: GE Trees Threaten Ecosystem Collapse](http://www.alternet.org/story/58477/), Dara Colwell, AlterNet, August 2, 2007.

**Links**

- [STOP GE Trees Campaign North America](http://www.globaljusticeecology.org/stopgetrees.php)
- [World Rainforest Movement](http://www.wrm.org.uy/)
- [Global Forest Coalition](http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/)
- [EcoNexus](http://www.econexus.info/)