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Widespread glyphosate spraying of North American forests continues unabated

For the past 40 years, along with other herbicides, glyphosate formulations have become widespread in forestry operations across North America, including on crown land across Canada and private timberlands in Oregon and Washington State.

The purpose of these herbicide and glyphosate applications is primarily to wipe out deciduous broadleaf tree species of lesser commercial value than needle-leaf softwoods like Lodgepole Pine or Douglas fir. In Canada the primary broadleaf "weed" is Trembling Aspen, a tree of critical importance to our ecosystems. Other "weeds" include alder, birch, live oak, maple, willow, and countless other leafy plants and shrubs.

However, the trees they get rid of have incredible importance to our forests and planet. Aspen trees can sequester 45% more CO2 than Lodgepole Pine, and 25% more than spruce (Carbon Investment Opportunities). Across our boreal forests, poplar species including aspen have the lowest probability of burning. In a Canadian study, pine forests burned 840% more than deciduous forests (Cummings, 2001). In another study, researchers estimate broadleaf forests to remain next to inflammable even as drought conditions worsen, in stark contrast to coniferous forests. (Girardin, 2013)

Wildlife are also incredibly dependent on broadleaf trees. In a Central BC study, 95% of all bird nests were in aspen trees, even though they were only 15% of the forest (Martin, 2011). Moose are found to be incredibly dependent on broadleaf trees as well, with one Prince George area study finding that moose preferred aspen bark in winter above all else (Ray 2012).

"As our planet continues to warm, biodiversity fades and forest fires grow worse, does it make sense to keep eliminating the trees with the highest biodiversity values, lowest probability of flammability, and best ability to sequester CO2 and reflect solar radiation from our forests? Obviously not," said Stop the Spray BC spokesperson James Steidle.

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