

Help monitor Whitebark Pine cone crops across northern BC

Whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) is western Canada's first officially endangered coniferous tree (listed under Canada's Species at Risk Act in 2012). Recovery efforts are underway across BC and western Alberta, but are limited by a shortage of seeds from healthy trees showing resistance to the deadly white pine blister rust fungus. Whitebark pines in northern BC produce good cone crops only approximately every 5 years. 2018 may be a good cone year.

Seed collection is expensive, requiring abundant lead time to raise funds, build cone cages to protect seeds from wildlife, recruit experienced tree climbers, test for seed quality, etc. Luckily, whitebark pine cones take 2 years to mature. You can help us to prepare by recording and photographing 1-year old conelets visible in fall-winter 2017.

What to do:

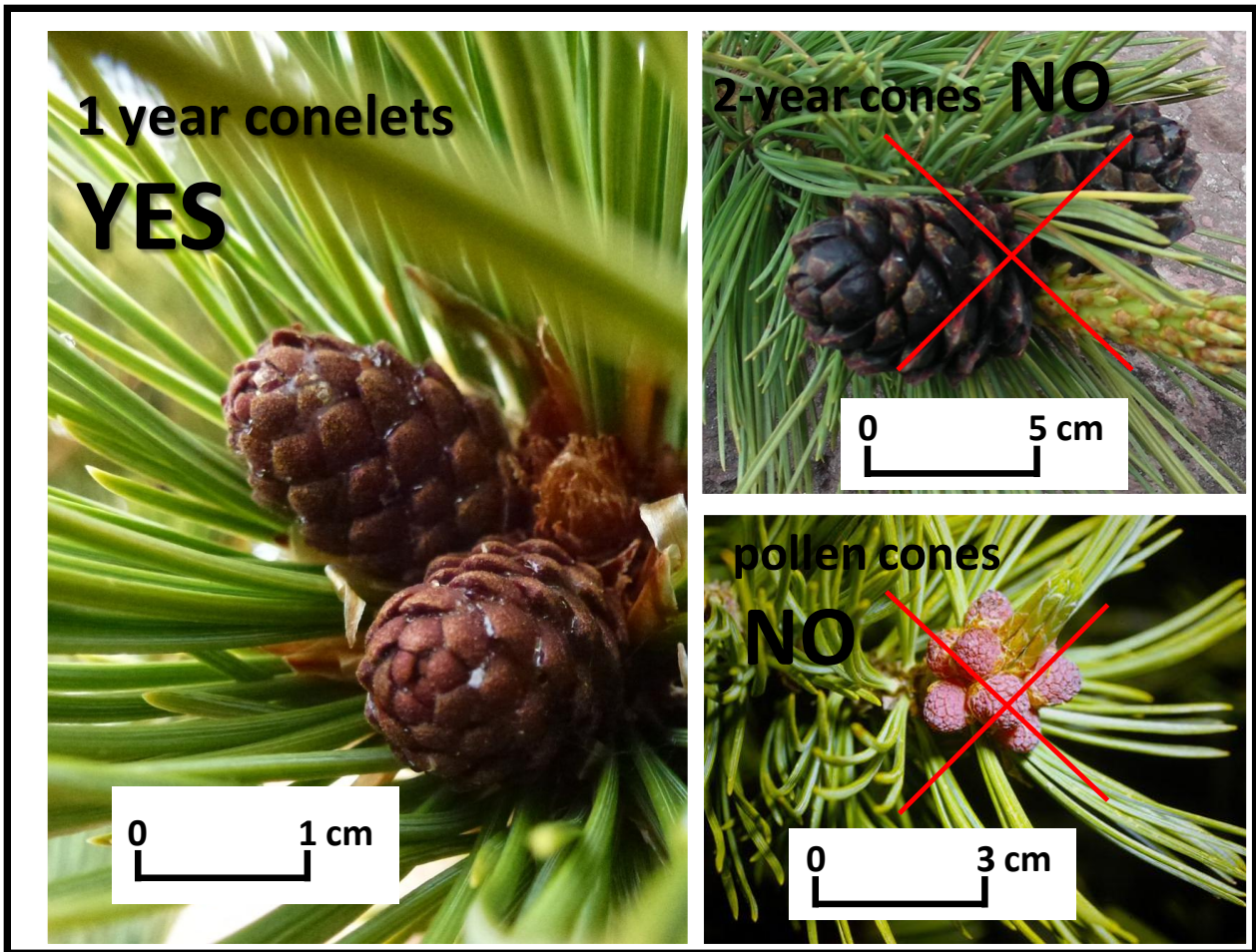
(1) When hiking or working at high elevations below timberline, keep your eyes open for this bushy-topped 5-needled pine tree. It looks like a lodgepole tree but is shorter with a flat top and needles in bundles of 5.



(2) Confirm that the tree is a whitebark pine. Count the needles in each bundle (5 rather than 2 or 3).

(3) Photograph the immature 1-year old conelets. They are purplish to pale brown and roughly the size of a grape, with thin, tightly appressed scales. Conelets are found at the end of branches, usually near the top of the tree.

We are not interested in pollen cones (pinkish to orange clusters, frequent on lower branches), nor mature 2-year old cones (size of an egg or mandarin orange, purplish to red brown in colour, with thick scales). It is too late to collect mature 2-yr old cones and the 2017 cone crop is poor.



(4) Record additional information about the location and abundance of conelets. Record GPS coordinates and elevation, if possible.

(5) Email your photos, location & abundance information to Sybille.Haeussler@unbc.ca

Name: _____ Email address: _____

Location: _____

GPS Coordinates if available (include Grid #): _____

Approximate number of immature conelets per tree: 1-5; 5-20; 20-50; 50+ conelets per tree

Approximate number of conelet-bearing trees in vicinity: 1-5; 5-20; 20-50; 50+ trees

Other comments (e.g., ease of access; health of trees) _____

PLEASE INCLUDE A PHOTO OF THE CONELETS, THANK YOU.

This is a project of the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, Smithers, BC with funding support from SERN-BC, BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, BC Parks, TD-Friends of Environment Foundation, Forest Enhancement Society and Wetzin'Kwa Community Forest Corporation.

To learn more, visit our website at www.bvcentre.ca/whitebark or the website of the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation of Canada at: <http://www.whitebarkpine.ca>

