



URGENT ACTION ALERT:

USDA Approves Mass-Release of GE Eucalyptus Trees In U.S.

“Eucalyptus is the perfect neoliberal tree. It grows quickly, turns a quick profit in the global market and destroys the earth.”—Jaime Aviles, La Jornada

On May 12th, 2010, the USDA approved a request by ArborGen, multi-national genetically engineered (GE) trees company, to release 260,000 cold-tolerant GE eucalyptus trees in so-called “field trials” in seven states across the U.S. South. ArborGen also has a request pending with the USDA to commercially release GE eucalyptus trees for vast plantations across Texas, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina.

GE eucalyptus tree plantations pose an unprecedented threat to U.S. forests.

In California, eucalyptus trees were introduced from Australia in the mid-1800s. Today they have spread throughout the state. They pose a serious wildfire danger and California spends millions to eradicate them. In early 2009 in Australia, raging wildfires, exacerbated by a drought, moved through eucalyptus groves at over 100 kilometers per hour, devastating wildlife and killing nearly 200 people. **A drought in the Southern U.S. could result in similar devastating wildfires if eucalyptus plantations were developed there.**

We work closely with groups worldwide where eucalyptus plantations are having devastating impacts. Based on the documented impacts eucalyptus plantations have had elsewhere, eucalyptus plantations here will likely cause:

- **Clearcutting of biodiverse forests** to replace with eucalyptus plantations (called “green deserts”);
- **Invasive spread of GE eucalyptus trees** into native ecosystems;
- **Increased wildfire danger**—Eucalyptus contain a highly volatile oil;
- **Displacement of wildlife** that cannot use the eucalyptus for habitat or food;
- **Contamination of soils and groundwater** with toxic agrochemicals used on the plantations;
- **Worsening of Drought**—Eucalyptus have deep tap roots, monopolize ground water and dry up soils.
- **Worsening of climate change** through the destruction of carbon rich native forests for carbon poor plantations.

Large plantations of eucalyptus have depleted the availability of fresh water for communities, forests and other ecosystems. In the Lumaco District of Chile, for example, some Indigenous Mapuche communities are completely surrounded by eucalyptus plantations. While they previously had year-round access to fresh water, today they must truck water in because the eucalyptus plantations have depleted the local water supply.

Eucalyptus is also a known host for the deadly pathogenic fungus *Cryptococcus Gattii*, which has recently been found in the Pacific Northwest and can kill both humans and wildlife.

In addition to these impacts, commercial release of GE eucalyptus trees would open the door to the commercialization of genetically engineered versions of native trees, including poplar and pine, that would contaminate forests with GE traits, devastating forest ecosystems and wildlife.

GE cold-tolerant eucalyptus trees are also a threat to forests globally. If ArborGen perfects them here they will export them for use in huge monoculture tree plantations in countries across the global south.

Global Justice Ecology Project and the STOP GE Trees Campaign are mobilizing to fight this threat.

We need your help! This will be a lengthy battle—ArborGen has millions of dollars in profits at stake and is activating their PR machine. Please help us stop these deadly GE eucalyptus plantations.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST GE TREES AND EUCALYPTUS PLANTATIONS!

To be alerted to updates on this situation and get involved in the fight to stop GE eucalyptus trees, email us at contact@globaljusticeecology.org or go to www.nogetrees.org