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The Scientific Basis of the Target Plant Concept

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Message from the Guest Editors

Reforestation and restoration using nursery-produced seedlings is often the most reliable way to ensure the successful establishment and rapid growth of native plants. Seedling establishment success depends greatly on decisions and considerations made prior to planting, and yet seedlings are often grown without full consideration of the intended outplanting site and conditions. The best seedling can vary greatly from site to site depending on environmental conditions and objectives, but when strategies align limiting factors and mitigating measures, successful attainment of the objectives of the planting project—be it reforestation or restoration—can be increased. The Target Plant Concept is an effective framework for selecting seedlings and other types of plant material based on specific characteristics best-suited to a given site. These characteristics are often scientifically derived from testing the factors that can be linked to outplanting success, such as seedling morphology and physiology, genetic source, and overcoming limiting factors on outplanting sites.

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