Fund a Forest: How we can help plant 1 Billion trees with drones

A Canadian startup is aiming to plant 1 billion trees by 2028 by using drones — and it's proving that it's more efficient to do so.

There's a new player in the reforestation industry — and it's a drone company. Based in Ontario, Flash Forest is a small team with big ideas: using automated technology and drones to plant trees.

According to reports from the International Panel on Climate Change, the next 10 years are crucial for taking action before we see adverse effects on the planet. So Flash Forest wants to tackle climate change firsthand by planting trees. But to do so, the company won't use shovels. Instead, the team will use aerial mapping, drones, and pneumatics to get the job done.

"Planting trees is currently the fastest and cheapest way today to sequester carbon," according to Flash Forest's website. "With billions of trees planted each year, we can effectively reverse our impact."

Right now, reforestation projects are largely powered by humans with shovels. According to Flash Forest's research, drones are faster, safer for workers, and much more cost-effective.

"Flash Forest can plant at 10 times the normal rate, and at 20 percent of the cost of traditional tree planting techniques," reads the company's website. "With drone engineering, we bring new levels of accuracy, precision, and speed to the reforestation industry."

At this speed, Flash Forest claims it can easily scale its operations and plant more trees faster than the traditional method of boots-on-the-ground workers. Just one drone can plant 165 trees in 3 minutes: a superhuman feat that could never be done without engineering and technology.

How Does It Work?

The drones will use aerial mapping to survey an area to find the best planting sites. Then a drone operator will fly a drone over the site, which uses a pneumatic device to fire seedpods into the earth.

The seedpods that Flash Forest uses each contain three pre-germinated seeds, mycorrhizae, fertilizers, and other nutrients. In the early stages of the project, Flash Forest tested the efficacy of over 20 species of trees in different ecosystems across the region. Tree species the startup uses for planting include pine, birch, spruce, fir, and maple.

After planting, workers can even use the drone to monitor the progress of tree growth. But before all that happens, Flash Forest needs to reach its Kickstarter goal of $50,000. (No matter how much you pledge, every single dollar plants a tree.)

Future Plans for Flash Forest

So far, it has only planted in southern Ontario. But future planting locations include other locations across Canada and the Atlantic Forest in Brazil. “We are actively working to scale this globally,” stated Flash Forest on its Kickstarter page. Once fully funded, Flash Forest hopes to achieve its goal of planting 1 billion trees by 2028.

The company reached its first Kickstarter goal in less than 24 hours. You can read more about the timeline for the project, plus back it to plant some trees here.

“We started Flash Forest with the goal of offsetting carbon emissions enough to have a significant and measurable impact on climate change within the next decade,” wrote Flash Forest. And so far, the team members at Flash Forest are well on their way to doing so.

Source: https://gearjunkie.com/flash-forest-drones-plant-trees