

HIGHLIGHT

WSU and Weyerhaeuser: A tree-growing research partnership



(Above left: alder plants ready for test plots; (middle) Barri Herman, left, and Jon Johnson; (at right): a look inside one of three free-standing greenhouses set up for this project.)

A serendipitous working partnership at Potlatch and an interest in eucalyptus has turned into new applied research collaboration between Jon Johnson, Associate Professor, Natural Resources at WSU Puyallup and Barri Herman, Weyerhaeuser Senior Program Manager of Short Rotation Plantations. The Weyerhaeuser Corporation had a particular research question, focused on growing plantations of clonal alder with specific wood properties. They came to Johnson knowing of his experience with cold tolerance work on poplars and pines, looking for his help. Weyerhaeuser's red alder plantations were experiencing frost damage on some of their better performing clones. They needed to know which clones were more frost tolerant to plant in their frost-susceptible areas. Alder is a popular and valuable wood for saw logs and also acts as a nitrogen fixer for the soil.

The research partnership constructed three greenhouses, one hot-temperature and two cold-temperatures, which Weyerhaeuser has contributed to Washington State University at Puyallup. "The Weyerhaeuser aim is to find the fastest way to get these trees to root and grow," said Herman. "And, Jon is helping us speed it up." The project will run for at least five years and will create a strong platform for potential future collaborations.

WSU Puyallup: Solutions for the Region; Programs for Its People

Highlights is provided by the people and programs of WSU Puyallup from February through December. For story ideas for upcoming Highlights, please contact either Tanyalee Erwin, terwin@wsu.edu, 253-445-4504, or Jon Newkirk, jnewkirk@wsu.edu, 253-445-4568. If your email is set to text messages only and you wish to see the graphical version of this Highlight, please email Tanyalee.