

Openings in the Forest



The Green Mountain National Forest clearcut the two-acre area before you to provide timber for local markets while creating wildlife habitat and a temporary scenic vista.

In a mature forest, tree crowns shade the forest floor. Once clearcutting removes the forest canopy, sunlight warms the soil. In this bright opening, sun-loving grasses, raspberries, Pin Cherry, aspen, and White Birch quickly take root. Their fruits and seeds draw mice, voles, ruffed grouse, and chestnut-sided warblers, and these, in turn, attract foxes, weasels, hawks, and owls.

Buried Treasure

When an opening develops in a mature forest, sun-loving plant species take root almost immediately. Where do their seeds come from? Aspen and White Birch are easy to figure out—their tiny, buoyant seeds travel far on the wind. But what about Pin Cherry and raspberry, with their heavy, flesh-covered seeds?

Forest ecologists have discovered that the seeds of these plants can lie dormant in forest soil for decades, only sprouting when direct sunlight warms the soil. Thus, animals eat the fruits and spread their seeds throughout the forest in their droppings. Like buried treasure, the seeds wait within the forest soil, ready to start the successional process anew.



For Moosalamoo Association Information:
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