

## Unit 2. Forest and climate crisis

### “Sitka Spruce going Bananas”



#### Description

The non-native Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), used in a planned effort to afforest coastal areas of Norway, is a tough species, suited for wet, salty climate. It grew fast and global warming increased growth even more. Due to societal transformations in Norway, Sitka plantings and neighboring farmland areas became largely left unmanaged, resulting in an uncontrolled spread of the Sitka, changing of the landscapes from pastoral agricultural to monocultural forest-land. Thus, a combination of global warming and the lack of sustainable management created a situation where a species, valued for its ability to produce volumes of fiber, ended up as a problem both for local communities and for local ecology.



The spread of Sitka became a potential threat to eliminate the traditional heather-clad landscapes of the west coast. As a result, Sitka spruce is now black-listed and no longer allowed for afforestation in Norway. In addition, public and private efforts are established to exterminate large areas of Sitka. Both the fully grown trees, but particularly laborious is to find and remove all small seedlings that threaten to grow back in the future.



#### Goals

Main goal is to remove Sitka from locations near habituated areas, attractive vistas and popular terrain for trekking/recreation.

This will be achieved through public support from national, regional and local funds, generally implemented through the Counties and Municipalities, and from voluntary action by local community organisations.



#### Activities

At village and municipal level, ‘dugnads’ (Norwegian word for voluntary local action) are organized to manually cut down or rip up seedlings and young trees. There has been many such dugnads over the last year, and they will continue until local people think they have solved the situation.



Forest Owner associations and regional authorities combine to launch “clear-cutting of Sitka forests”. This is often a costly and complex process as the forests often are located on islands with no road access to bring in equipment.

#### Articles

- <https://botaniskforening.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Røsk-opp-en-pøbelgran.pdf>
- <https://www.nrk.no/vestland/xl/trea-som-tok-over-oya-1.15422638>