Large-scale solution to climate change? Living Carbon plants first genetically modified trees in US forest

Living Carbon's poplars start their lives in a lab in Hayward, Calif. There, biologists tinker with how the trees conduct photosynthesis, the series of chemical reactions plants use to weave sunlight, water and carbon dioxide into sugars and starches. In doing so, they follow a precedent set by evolution: Several times over Earth's long history, improvements in photosynthesis have enabled plants to ingest enough carbon dioxide to cool the planet substantially.

On [February 13], on the land of Vince Stanley, a seventh-generation farmer who manages more than 25,000 forested acres in Georgia's pine belt, mattock-swinging workers carrying backpacks of seedlings planted nearly 5,000 modified poplars. The tweaked poplars had names like Kookaburra and Baboon, which indicated which "parent" tree they were cloned from, and were interspersed with a roughly equal number of unmodified trees. By the end of the unseasonably warm day, the workers were drenched in sweat and the planting plots were dotted with pencil-thin seedlings and colored marker flags poking from the mud.

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