

Mechanized tree planting continues in Latgale

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After using a special excavator to plant forests in Kurzeme last year, this year, with the combination of new technology, lack of skilled tree planters and a damp forest floor, Latvia's State Forests (LVM) has already planted more than 300 hectares of trees in Latgale, according to Latgale Regional Television on April 22.

Last year 130 hectares were planted in northern Kurzeme. Use of an excavator was as effective as three workers planting trees by hand, but there's still a lack of people with the skills to operate the excavators using new technology adopted from Scandinavian countries that allows for access to damper areas, said CT Parts Owner Aleksandrs Danilins.

"It's a new shift in Latvia and there are very few specialists who can immediately come and work. A person just needs to have experience at least driving in the forest with an excavator, otherwise it takes them a lot of time and practice to get the hang of it," said Danilins.

For LVM forest workers in the Lubāna area it was their first time using such specialized equipment. There are still concerns that during frosty conditions soil can freeze around the excavator barrel, or in damp conditions it can get stuck, but it's more effective overall, as it's able to carry more than 70 plants at once.

Since weather conditions have been so favorable planting in Latgale could already begin in March. There are further plans to plant trees using the excavators in the Ludza, Balvi and Rēzekne areas. Later on down the road this equipment will be used in Vidzeme and Zemgale as well.

"Work by hand is still cumbersome, and in the sun or rain - it's a discomfort for a person to work," said forestry operations expert Juris Katrevičs.

LVM plans to plant a total of 29 million trees this year.

Youtube Link: https://youtu.be/90CahRw6Nrk

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