

# Nature Rebuilds a Forest

A forest fire can be a dangerous and frightening event, especially if there are houses nearby. The flames of a major forest fire can cause thousands of trees to be destroyed in a short time, leaving behind miles of charred landscape.

A forest fire in North America can have some good effects, though. Often, fire spreads through a forest very quickly. As a result, older trees survive, while the dead plant matter and underbrush are burned. Therefore, space is available for new forest growth. Because the ashes of the burnt undergrowth provide nutrients for the soil, new plants sprout and grow easily. More sunlight reaches the forest floor, so young trees begin poking through the rich earth in just a few weeks. As they grow taller, the new trees attract a whole new population of insects, birds, and small animals. After a few years, a new forest takes the place of the old one.



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