

Effects of starch-based superabsorbent polymer on survival and physiology of *Pinus ponderosa* seedlings
exposed to severe drought stress

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Supplemental Methods 1: Seedling Selection Criteria

We selected 500 out of the 860 obtained seedlings using the following criteria:

1. Exclude any seedlings that are dead or have significant browning and dieback,
2. Exclude any seedlings with a basal stem diameter under 2 millimeters,
3. Exclude any seedlings that have a significant amount of water mold, scale, or other significant fungal presence,
4. Exclude any seedlings with codominant or multiple stems,
5. Exclude any seedlings with a severed apical bud.

Applying these conditions, we chose the most vigorous-looking seedlings until we reached 500 seedlings, then composted the remaining plants.