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Plant Materials Development for Disturbed Southwestern Landscapes

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The service areas of the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center are primarily located in the arid and semiarid ecoregions. These regions receive less than 13 inches of annual precipitation making it extremely challenging to establish field plantings using traditional methods. Established in 1934, the Plant Materials Center and its partners have been developing effective planting strategies for the arid Southwest. These planting strategies include some type of moisture enhancement treatments which are necessary for successful establishment in arid environments. Treatments include mulches, hydrophilic polymers, deep-rooted systems, the deep-planting methods of longstems and pole cuttings into shallow groundwater, proper timing of plantings, and the use of local populations. Case studies will be presented that will include photos of sites with before and after examples of plantings.