

Notes by the
Wayside

(By John J. Inskeep, County Agent)

This article is pointed toward the 175 Clackamas County residents who have obtained State Nursery forestry tree order blanks this fall and to others who will obtain seedlings from private sources.

During a "Show Me Trip" to ranger districts in the Mt. Hood National Forest last September, District Ranger Earl Karlinger showed the group an area reforested 10 years ago. One portion of the area had been fall planted. The other was planted in early spring. This planting is not far from Three Lynx, a near perfect stand remains on the fall planted portion. Only half a stand remains on the spring planted portion. It is a good object lesson.

Incidentally, this trip was organized by the agricultural committee of the Oregon City Chamber of Commerce and the Extension Service. Eighteen businessmen and farmers attended.

Fall plantings stand a better chance for survival under most conditions. Project Forester Al Parker advises planting before Christmas where this is possible. Do not plant on land sustaining a heavy sod. Such areas should be summer fallowed first. This is the experience of Bill Helmtg, Molalla who is systematically reforesting 175 acres of tillable land. Many tree plantings of last winter show light survival. Bill carefully summer fallowed the area last winter. His tree survival is excellent.

An excellent stand of several Christmas tree species is found on the Red Soils Experimental Area. This area was planted on a former alta fescue sod and was also summer fallowed. Superintendent Jack McDermid made this planting on March 21. The point here is that spring plantings have a better chance for survival on a well prepared seedbed.

Our observation also leads us to believe that the ability to survive varies with species. Adapted Douglas fir seedlings seem harder, for instance, than Grand fir. Adrian Newton, Highlano, has a young planting of Grand fir with a survival of approximately 50 percent. They have grown through two summers.

These trees are subject to competition from creeping velvet grass. In the planting is an occasional Douglas fir. They have far outdistanced the growth of the Grand fir seedlings.

Across the fence is another planting consisting of Douglas fir of the same age. This planting is subject to grass competition also but they are growing rapidly, perhaps too rapidly for good Christmas tree form.

We inspected the Newton planting last spring and found a number of Grand fir seedlings presenting a sickly yellow color. In March we staked four rows. On two we fertilized with a goodly pinch of ammonium nitrate. The other two rows received a pinch of 16-20-0 ammonium phosphate.

Results from the fertilizer applications appear to have been of slight value. The area was cultivated once over with a rotary tiller last spring. All trees, fertilized or not, assumed a good green color with the coming of warm weather.

It would seem from these observations that such species as Grand fir, White fir, Silver fir, and Noble fir require a better seedbed and more care. Walter Hardy, Russellville, has noted that Noble fir seedlings require good culture during the first summer.

Careful planting helps to secure good survival. Fall plantings enable seedling roots to become better established before warm weather. Winter rains firm the soil around the roots and help to prevent soil drouth the next spring.

Planting directions may be secured in the Extension office in Oregon City. Those planting for the first time might profit from a visit from Project Forester Al Parker prior to planting operations.

And one final word of precaution. Do not allow seedling roots to become dry even for a minute. This is likely to occur during planting operations.

OBSELETE FARM STRUCTURES now are getting new attention from farm management experts, economists, engineers, and farm officials. Modernization of farm buildings to reduce farm costs is developing into the next big movement in the agricultural technological revolution.

The need for a major shift in scientific attention to structures is emphasized by a new survey conducted by agricultural engineers of the U. S. D. A. The survey shows that obsolete farm structures rob farmers of gains in income derived from giant strides made in production efficiency. Long time emphasis on reducing the actual cost of production has resulted in a serious lag in other segments of the farm end of agribusiness, such as buildings.

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