

# AROUND THE FARM Don Coin Walrod



Harvesting of forest seed cones is an important, although variable, industry in Columbia county and other forested counties of the state. In years of good cone production, the returns to pickers of the county may go as high as \$50,000 or more.

As far as we can determine at this time ,four buyers will be operating in the cone market this year as far as the county is concerned. They include Crown Zellerbach, Vernonia, buying for their own use; and Sunnyside Grocery and Enco Service Center, Vernonia; and Mory Feed and Seed, Rainier, buying for commercial forest seed companies.

Crown Zellerbach started advertising for low elevation cones last week. Other buyers were not active in the market at the start of the week, but probably will be soon, as low elevation harvest normally begins the latter part of August each year.

The origin of the seed is of considerable importance to the conebuyer, particularly now that research has shown that best results are obtained by growing trees from seed collected at corresponding elevations. This situation has started some seed users to collecting their own seed. However, individual pickers can meet established standards by following cone-buyers instructions.

Before going out to harvest cones, pickers should do, or be aware of several things in preparation including: (1) check with potential buyers to determine the species and origin as well as seed count and any other specifications; (2) cones need to be fresh without any evidence of having opened on the ground or on the tree; (3) cones are paid for on the basis of a measured bushel of clean cones; (4) Cones must average a minimum number of sound seed when cut lengthwise. This number will vary with buyers and price paid as well as the season. When seed is short and cones are scarce, buyers may accept three seed cones, but naturally, the better quality cones are preferred.

The easiest and most reliable way of examining cones is to lay the cone on a stump or board and split it lengthwise from the stem to the tip exactly through the center of the core. Cones are tough and a sharp, clean knife is necessary to prevent mutilation of the seeds which will be exposed on both sides of the split

After a cone attains full size, a seed then goes through a gradual change from a seed with a white, soft shell containing a milky, jelllike substance to a brown, hardshelled seed completely filled with a solid nut-like kernel. Cones should be harvested near this stage of development. With continued ripening, the cone scales begin to open and the seeds will fall out. Picking normally stops before this point.

Cone pickers generally find four principal methods as being the most effective in harvesting the forest seed crop. These include picking

Vernonia Eagle THURSDAY, SEPT. 3, 1964 from standing trees, from felled trees, gathering squirel-cut cones under trees, and salvaging squirrel

Most persons collecting on a small scale will pick from standing trees or make use of squirrel cuttings. In picking from standing trees the collector can get more cones from young trees with full crowns. Some cones may be reached from the ground by pulling branches into reach with a hook on the end of a pole. The main harvest is made by a picker climbing the trees, fastening himself to the tree with a safety belt, pulling branches to him with a hook, and putting the cones into an apple-picking bag.

Where squirrels are active they cut large quantities of cones - many more than they can use. This is especially true at high elevations where winter snows make storing a necessity. Gathering the cut cones stimulates the squirrels to greater cutting activity. In some localities a large harvest can be obtained by this method alone. Most squirrel cones are found on the ground underneath the trees, but it is frequently possible to find hoards or caches. In years of poor cone crop, squirrel hoards are not a good source of supply. The hoards are usually located in wet or damp, shady spots along streams or near springs. They may also be in hollow logs, old mosscovered logs, or in hollows under tree roots. Concentrations of cone scales may indicate a cache is near.

Some pickers have been able to collect cones by making arrangements with a logging operator to come in immediately after falling has been completed. Have a definite understanding with the logger so there will be no interference with the logging. For safety reasons it is best not to pick while logging is in process and to be especially careful with fire. Logging operators may be able to withhold the cutting of heavybearing trees until the cones are ready. A large open growing tree may yield up to 12 bushels of cones.

Adding up his score just before driving at each hole doesn't mean a golfer is a tee-totaler.

The old expression "You're full of prunes" probably originated at a boarding house.



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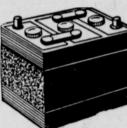
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QUESTION: May I notify the social security office of my new address by phone?

ANSWER: No. A change of address must be made in writing and should be signed by the person who gets the

QUESTION: How can I find out if my earnings have been reported by my employer?

ANSWER: You may check your record of earnings by writing to the Social Security Administration, Balti-more, Maryland, asking for a statement of your earnings. Your name, social security number, birth date and address must be shown on your request; and it must be signed by you. You can get such and post card form at your social securi-

ty office QUESTION: When I applied for my social security benefits I estimated that my earnings for the year would be \$1700. Now it looks as if they will be \$2100. Should I file a revised estimate now or wait until the end of the year?

ANSWER: You should file a revised estimate with the Social Security Administration right away; otherwise, you might be overpaid in beneifts which you would have to refund.

QUESTION: Why should you in-

quire before you retire?
ANSWER: The biggest advantage is that this gives social security an early start in processing your claim for benefits. The goal is to get your check for benefits to you at the earliest possible date.

It's past spring fever time, but remember that a good cold can spring a fever on you.

SHOP LOCALLY FIRST!



YOUNGSTERS living in Vernonia first went to school in this building, the first school house in town. The structure, built of hewn beams with hand split shakes for roofing in 1889, was located in front of the home now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Acaiturri. Photo,

owned by Bob Spencer, was taken in 1890 and the first teacher was Miss Lovelace. Students included such names as: Gilliham, Mellinger, Emmons, Mills, Peck, Ivy, Lavender, Spencer, Tucker, Parmer, Hosford and

### Museum Hours Given

The Columbia County Historical Society museum, located in the former mill office building on O. A. Hill, Vernonia, is open to the public Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. and offers much of interest to all who come to visit it. Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Hislop, curators, are on hand to greet visitors and answer questions about items.

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