

EXPANDED LABORATORY FACILITIES

Robert P. Karrfalt and Oscar Hall¹

Abstract

Changes that have occurred in the operation and physical facilities at the National Tree Seed Laboratory are presented.

Additional Key Words: Laboratory, Changes, Facilities

INTRODUCTION

Several major changes have recently occurred at the National Tree Seed Laboratory. Almost no area of the Laboratory is unaffected. Changes will lead to higher efficiency in the Laboratory services to the users.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Physical facilities have been modernized and expanded. The square footage increased 50 percent, which provides space for training and more efficient flow of work. With the doubling and tripling of the workload in recent years, the expanded work space is an asset to the Lab. Specific improvements include new lighting in all germination rooms; a new chilling unit for germination rooms; modernization of vacuum seed counting system; and construction of separate rooms for purity testing and quick tests. These improvements permit us to maintain the highest standards of testing accuracy, at the lowest possible cost.

¹ The authors are, respectively, Seed Processing Specialist and Seed Testing Specialist, USDA Forest Service, National Tree Seed Laboratory, Route 1, Box 182-B, Dry Branch, GA 31020.

Other important additions include a conference room where training sessions (coordinated through the Nursery and Tree Improvement Specialists) can be held for approximately 20 people, and a seed processing room where working demonstrations are set up for training. The seed processing room also aids us in quickly obtaining answers to questions on processing procedures or equipment. All physical plant improvements were completed and in use by October 1, 1982.

ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

Personnel changes include: a business manager who handles all business functions, including verifying payment of seed testing bills of collection, thereby freeing technical specialists to concentrate on offering the best in seed testing, seed processing and training services.

On July 1, 1982, the Forest Service and the Georgia Forestry Commission mutually agreed to terminate their 29-year-old agreement on service testing. Since that date, only Forest Service employees have been employed at the Lab.

Beginning October 1, 1982, seed testing charges were invoiced on USDA Forest Service Bill of Collection, and the money collected by the Federal government.

Establishing a new mail box changed our address to: Route 1, Box 182-B; Dry Branch, GA 31020.

SERVICES

A microcomputer is now in place at the Lab, and is used extensively for various computations, technical and administrative reports. This equipment frees our technician to provide more attention to the actual tests rather than the laborious jobs of manual calculations. Future computer application will lead us to automated generation of test results, rapid response to telephone inquiries for early test results, or possibly direct telecommunication of test results from the Lab's computer to the nursery's computer.

Becoming a totally Federal Lab has cut our available labor sharply. Therefore, "RUSH" or Cone Analysis Services are not available for the 1983-84 testing season.

CHARGES

Germination test charges, unfortunately, have increased from \$10 to \$18 per sample and ISTA Certificates from \$1.25 to \$2.00, as of August 1, 1982. Charges for all other tests will remain unchanged. Increasing costs of crepe cellulose paper, salaries, and electricity necessitated these changes.

SUMMARY

In summary, the combined 21st and 22nd Laboratory Report was the last published report. Publication of future useful findings will be in Tree Planters' Notes, which will replace the Lab reports. We believe support to the nurserymen in the south from the National Tree Seed Laboratory will be the best possible. Earl Belcher remains Director of the Laboratory. Oscar Hall is the Seed Testing Specialist and Bob Karrfalt is the Seed Processing Specialist. Any member of this team is available for technical advice.