

Effect of vegetation control on the survival and growth of Scots pine and Norway spruce planted on former agricultural land

Paula Jylha and Jyrki Hytonen

Abstract: The effects of competing vegetation and various weed control methods (fibreboard mulch, cover crop of clover, and various herbicides) on the survival and growth of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.) and Norway spruce (*Picea abies* (L.) Karst.) seedlings were compared based on 6- to 11-year data from a field experiment established as a randomized block design with three replications in southern Finland. The most effective herbicides significantly reduced the weed cover for 2 or 3 years. The mortality, basal diameter, height, and volume of Scots pine significantly correlated with percent cover of the ground vegetation. In the case of Norway spruce, only the stem diameter correlated significantly with percent cover of the competing vegetation. This was probably due to the severe frost damage that occurred in the third growing season. The mortality of pine began to increase only when the vegetation cover had exceeded 60%. After 11 years, the stand volume on the pine plots treated with terbutylazinc was almost double that of the untreated plots (32 vs. 17 m³ ha⁻¹), but this difference was not statistically significant. Mulch and cover crop did not significantly affect pine growth or mortality. Recurrent frost damage may explain why none of the studied treatments significantly affected the mortality and volume growth of Norway spruce.

Résumé : Les effets de la vegetation competitrice et de differentes methodes de contrble des mauvaises herbes de panneau de fibres de bois, culture de protection de trefle et divers herbicides) sur la survie et la croissance de semis de pin sylvestre (*Pinus sylvestris* L.) et d'epicea commun (*Picea abies* (L.) Karst.) ont etc compares sur la base de donnees de 6 a 11 ans provenant dune experience au champ etablie scion un dispositif en blocs aleatoires avec trois repetitions dans le sud de la Finlande. Les herbicides les plus efficaces ont significativement reduit le couvert de mauvaises herbes pendant deux a trois ans. La mortalite, le diametre au collet, la hauteur et le volume du pin sylvestre etaient significativement correles avec lc pourcentage de couvert de la vegetation au sol. Dans le cas de l'epicea commun, seul le diametre de la tige etait significativement correle avec le pourcentage de couvert de la vegetation competitrice. Cela etait probablement chi aux dommages severes causes par le gel au cours de la troisieme saison de croissance. La mortalite du pin commencait A augmenter seulement lorsque le couvert de vegetation depassait le niveau de 60 %. Apres II ans, le volume du peuplement dans les parcelles de pin traitees avec la terbutyllosine etait environ le double de celui des parcelles non traitees (32 vs. 17 in³•ha⁻¹), mais cette difference n'etait pas significative. Le pail-lis et la culture de protection Wont pas eu d'effet significatif sur la croissance et la mortalite du pin. Les dommages recurrents dus au gel peuvent expliquer pourquoi aucun des traitements etudies n'a eu d'effet significatif sur la mortalite et la croissance en volume de l'epicea commun.

[Traduit par la Redaction]

Introduction

More than 240 000 ha of agricultural fields have been afforested in Finland since 1969 (Finnish Forest Research Institute 2004). Norway spruce (*Picea abies* (L.) Karst.), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.), and silver birch (*Betula pendula* Roth) are the most common tree species planted on abandoned fields. Although tree stands located on such former agricultural land can be highly productive, successful affor-

estation of agricultural fields is considered to be far more difficult than reforestation of clear-cut forestland. Researchers studying the outcome of practical field afforestation have reported seedling damage caused especially by

We are unable to supply this entire article because the publisher requires payment of a copyright fee. You may be able to obtain a copy from your local library, or from various commercial document delivery services.

Received 9 November 2005. Accepted 20 February 2006.
Published on the NRC Research Press Web site at
<http://cjfr.nrc.ca> on 5 October 2006.

P. Jylha² and J. Hytonen. Finnish Forest Research Institute, Kannus Unit, P.O. Box 44, FI-69101 Kannus, Finland.

This article is one of a selection of papers published in the Special Issue on Forest Vegetation Management.

² Corresponding author (e-mail: paula.jylha@metla.fi).