

CONTAINERIZED SEEDLING PROGRAM - WHERE DO WE STAND

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Containerized seedling programs have been tried for several years by various private, state, and federal foresters. Today, all groups have banded together to pool information and work collectively on the many problems that must be solved. The U.S. Forest Service has assigned the Stuart Project the mission of producing containerized seedlings for test out-planting throughout the southern region. Seedlings have been grown successfully for the last four years in this pilot program. During 1969 and 1970, seedling were grown for twelve weeks and out-planted four times per year by personnel from the Southern Station. These plantings were observed for survival and growth. Results were promising so the program size was increased and 500 thousand seedling were grown in 1971 and 600 thousand in 1972. This included small quantities of hardwoods and all species of southern pine. There are many advantages to Containerization of Seedlings. Seedlings can be planted over a longer season. This system is highly adapted to mechanization. Seedling can be stored for longer period of time when the weather is unfavorable. Nursery soil and disease problems can be solved by using an artificial soil which is homogenous and nearly sterile. Since soil constituents are practically devoid of nutrients, better control of nutrition is gained. Also, there can be no carry-over or build-up of insect, disease, weed or nutritional problems because of fresh soil for each crop.

Packaged seedlings are very mobile and can be moved from any location. Labor can be used much more effective by turning out several crops each year.

SEEDLING PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES

The first seedling were produced in spiral wound kraft tubes using a soil mixture of one-third topsoil, one-third sand, and one-third vermulite. These seedlings were grown in kraft boxes in an open area. This year greenhouses were constructed and seedling were grown indoors in Japanese paper pots and commercial soil mix. These paper pots were purchased at Paperpot Products, Inc., 3840 S. Crenshaw Blvd., Suite 217, Los Angeles, California, 90008.