HARDWOOD SEEDLING GRADES FOR THE INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

by
Lee Hinds
Lincoln-Oaks Nurseries
Bismarck, North Dakota

Let me begin by asking some questions. Number 1: How many of you drink an occasional beer? The Northern Great Plains supplies the greatest share of barley for the brew. Number 2: How many of you eat bread, rolls, macaroni, etc? The Great Plains supplies the greatest amount of the wheat for these products.

Hardwoods protect the land that raises these crops plus livestock shelters for a good deal of the nation's beef.

I have never shot a gun that had a Douglas fir stock. I have hit baseballs with a 2 x 4 but not as well as with a regular wooden bat.

We do use newspapers and a piece of plywood now and then so I will give a little. It takes more to raise a tree with 9" of precipitation and if your Douglas fir and hemlock were any good they would grow where our hardwoods must grow.

Maybe you feel that we are prejudice in favor of hardwoods -- not so -- we would just like a little equal billing occasionally.

Our problems are similar in determining how to measure grade.

First we must ask ourselves: What are we looking for? Profit in selling a larger seedling? No, we are interested in a seedling that is near the optimum planting size to give us the best percentage of survival. We must look at the extra costs in handling larger stock and perhaps extra time in the nursery to reach the larger size or the "correct" year class when it isn't really necessary.

We grade for minimum and maximum size caliper and minimum height, plus culling. All trees are topped to a given height, eliminating a maximum height grade out.

Our sizes in inches are well established. The year designation is really meaningless, especially in view of the greenhouse culture programs adopted in some species.

One proposal is to go to a metric conversion based on the established and adopted grades and to eliminate the age class as a prerequisite to grading.

A green ash now requires a 7/32" minimum and a 16/32" maximum caliper 1" above the root collar and must be 2-0 with no specifications on root size. This can be converted to metric and fit into any tree seedling description code. Samples of the various lots could be measured within these tolerances and the average for the lot determined.

Our language should be the same but the requests from the field can not be so complicated and *fussy* as to drive the nurserymen out of his tree to meet all these requests.

Many of the exact gradings apply only to research projects and highly technical application for one reason or another.

The more demands put on the nursery the higher the cost of production, and the piper must be paid.

We have not discussed the grade standards of the AAN as it refers to our products and perhaps i. is best not to have the same language with the landscape-retail type businesses but then it might help bridge a gap that exists between us now.

In 1949, Dr. E. J. George (deceased on 7/18/75) did an extensive study on Prairie and Rocky Mountain States Grade Standards for Forest Planting Stock. In 1961 the North Dakota Farm Forestry Committee reviewed and adopted a grade standard based on Ernie's work primarily. Then at Mt. Sopris in 1966 or so this group adopted these same standards for the Intermountain Region. We would be premature to adopt new methods or language at this meeting without some intensive thinking and considera-tion.

Consideration must be given to the seedlings physiological condition as well as it's morphological condition when we "grade."

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that a committee be established to consider a uniform method of seedling grade nomenclature and that this committee report, in writing, prior to our next meeting to the members with the objective of a decision at the mext meeting.

Thank you.