

THE WASHINGTON SCENE

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Like any other activity, the forest nursery business runs in cycles. It started with small nurseries producing a few thousand seedlings, mostly broadcast seeded, watered by hand, weeded by hand, and lifted by hand. In Europe practically each forest district had its own nursery close to the planting site, run by the district forester as one of his many duties. The quality of the stock probably was not very high.

Then came mechanization, mass production, irrigation systems, fertilization schedules, systems of weed control, mechanical lifters and an understanding and application of the laws of plant physiology. Running a nursery has become a specialty and has caused the need for meetings of these specialists, like this one. While great strides were taken in producing millions of seedlings of top quality in a physiological sense it was not until fairly recently that any thought was given to their genetic quality.

Now that we do have tree improvement programs however, I see us returning to smaller and smaller batches of seed and seedlings in order to keep separate provenances, seed from various seed production areas, seed orchards and even of particular crosses. I see therefore a potential conflict developing between the need for carefully maintaining the identity of small seedlots through the harvested seedling and the operational demands of efficient mass production.

Until now I've talked about bareroot nurseries. I should also mention the most significant development in forest nurseries in decades; the greenhouse nursery where seedlings are grown in containers. This method of producing tree seedlings has taken the west by storm. From 0.9 million in 1970 to 52.4 million seedlings in 1977 to quote from Frank TerBush's Reforestation Notes. The curve seems to be flattening out, however. Perhaps a more or less steady ratio between container and bareroot seedlings has been achieved (1:3) or maybe this is just a pause before taking off again.

Now I wish to speak on a subject dear to all of us. Money. This year it seems that we will have \$801,000 in CM-4, some \$450,000 more than we have been getting these last several years. The President has signed the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, but there still seems to be some doubt whether the money actually will become available. However, on the basis of the budget submissions from the Regions and Areas the extra money has been tentatively allocated. The bulk of the increase goes to the Southeastern Area, mainly for capital investments. The next biggest chunk goes to the Northeastern Area. The remainder is slated to go to the west.

Next year we will come out with a new reporting form. This form will combine CM-4 and Title IV with the CFM report. I know you'll like the CM-4 report. Just a few simple questions, no more narrative report,

no more listing of nurseries. A few other items were also dropped. We did include a new category however, but I think you'll agree with me that we should monitor the production of containerized seedlings. For Title IV we'll drop the planting report and concentrate on tree improvement. A third part will deal with items that were added to the CM-4 report a few years ago, but do not properly belong there. These may be estimated and will be identified as such in the National summary.

In the last few years without increases in CM-4 appropriations, allocation among the States has not varied much. We cost-share with 14 States for an average of 7-8 thousand dollars. We feel that a good portion of CM-4 funds should go to technical assistance, pilot plant tests and equipment development.

All States will thus benefit from these activities. Speaking of technical assistance, I don't have to sing the praises for our western nursery and greenhouse specialist Steve McDonald. At first I was a little dubious about putting a lot of money in the Westwide herbicide study, but after visiting a number of nurseries last month and hearing of the astronomical sums that handweeding costs, I am in full support.

We also feel that equipment development plays an important role in the forest tree nursery business. For quite a few years, State and Private Forestry has sponsored such work in a modest way. Quite often we fund projects jointly with Timber Management in the National Forest System. Our latest contribution was the nursery equipment catalog. I hope everyone here has a copy and finds it useful.

A description of "the Washington Scene" would not be complete without a report on what Congress is doing in the legislative field that concerns forestry. You are all familiar with the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA for short). There are at present oversight hearings going on that may result in some amendments to make implementation somewhat smoother. There may even be drastic changes which will take the planning away from the Forest Service and place it in a far broader context in the hands of the Department. The Forest Service would then be left with the implementation phase of the Act. Time will tell what will come out of this. The National Forest Management Act which recently passed, got us out of the impasse with respect to harvesting on National Forests but did not do much for State and Private forestry. Perhaps that is the reason that Congressman Weaver, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Forests introduced the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Cooperative Assistance Bill.

This is a sort of omnibus bill putting together all the farflung authorities for the numerous State and Private Forestry Acts and making a coherent whole of it while filling in gaps and omissions. No hearings are scheduled yet for this bill and it seems late in the year to expect definitive action. But the stage is set and there will be time to look for co-sponsors.

At the same time Mr. Weaver introduced a similar omnibus bill for forestry research (Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act) and a bill to amend the Smith-Lever Act in order to expand the forestry extension program (Forest Resources Extension Act). These bills are at the same stage as the private forestry bill. Enactment of these bills would have a considerable impact on the future of forestry in the United States.