

UTAH STATE NURSERY DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE NURSERY PLANS

William C. Prather
Forester/Nursery Operations
Utah Forestry and Fire Control
Salt Lake City, Utah

The Utah State Seedling Nursery began in 1956 when the State assumed control of the Utah State University Nursery being supervised by the Silvicultural Department at the University. At this time, production was 80,000 plants per year. The location was in Green Canyon northeast of Logan, Utah and had a good soil but it was extremely rocky. All the labor was done by hand because it was too rocky for equipment to be used, so as a result, a decision was made in 1972 to move the location to an area known as "the old prison farm", located at the Utah State Prison. It took two years to make all the arrangements and get funding through the Legislature for the development.

In the summer of 1975, preliminary work on buildings and irrigation systems was begun. A 120,000 gallon pond already existed and was modified slightly to meet our needs and serve as a storage facility for irrigation. A large 120 by 40 foot partially underground building also existed on the site and served as a temporary office and garage area until other buildings could be erected. Late in the fall of 1975, our present work facilities were completed. The building houses 11,000 square feet of work and storage area. It contains 6,000 square feet of area for sorting, grading and packaging.

Also inside the building we have two large coolers for storing lifted stock from the field and packaged stock ready for shipment. Each cooler is 34 x 33 feet with 10 foot ceilings. In addition, we have a 1900 cubic foot freezer for seed storage and a 1,000 cubic foot cooler for seed stratification. There is a large employee lunch room and first aid room which is temporarily being used as office space. Restroom, janitorial area and a small workshop complete the facilities.

We are currently in phase three of our nursery development which includes an office building and a 500,000 gallon enclosed water tank. The tank was completed in May and our office building is scheduled for completion in September.

At the present time we have 16 acres under cultivation. I say cultivation rather than production because we have a tremendous weed Problem at the present time and our production is way down. It is an old farm site and as most of you are aware, this presents some tough problems. We are developing a soil management plan to access our Problems and derive some solutions as well as participating in a herbicide study being conducted in the west by Dr. Russ Ryker. It is a three year program and hopefully will produce some herbicide data which will enable us to control our weeds.

Future plans call for an additional 14 acres of seedbed development and 10 acres of seed orchard. A drip irrigation system will serve the seed orchard. Also we are adding a greenhouse to try growing some of our conifer stock in containers. In the very near future we hope to incorporate geothermal energy into the greenhouse for heating. We have several hot wells and springs in the area and are waiting for funding from ERDA to start drilling. We hope to be able to supply some significant research results once we get the system established. If the system proves worthwhile, then an additional four to five greenhouses will be erected. We hope eventually to raise all our conifers to greenhouses and supply only bare root stock in shrubs and deciduous species.

In conclusion, we are currently producing about 200,000 seedlings Per year. In five years we hope to be able to produce two to three million with our maximum goals set in the vicinity of 4 1/2 to 5 million. Our demand is not that great at this time, and it will challenge us to create that demand by better informing the general public to our conservation program and by creating an environment conscious industry who will see a need for reclaiming spoiled areas.