

The Soils Testing Program for Tree Nurseries and the Soil Management Workshop.

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Abstract.--A brief discussion of the status of the forest tree nursery soils testing program and the upcoming nursery soil management workshop.

THE SOILS TESTING PROGRAM

This is an update on two programs of particular interest to managers of bare-root nurseries. The first is a soils testing program being funded by State and Private Forestry. This program is aimed at acquiring a complete battery of soil and foliage analysis tests for all state and non-industrial private forest tree nurseries in the west and south. The northeast has been involved in this work for several years. The project involves soil sampling, testing, analysis, and interpretation. The work is being conducted by Dr. A. L. Leaf and the staff of the forest soils laboratory, State University of New York, College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, Syracuse, New York. The project is currently in its first year, with two more years to go. The key elements of this program are:

1. Participating nurseries will be provided with a complete soil analysis of their nursery and foliage analyses of the trees growing in it.
2. Test results will be interpreted and converted into soil amendment recommendations by one of the leading authorities on the subject.
3. Generated data will enter a computer data bank which should, ultimately, contribute to evolution of more refined guides for tree nursery fertility management.

Now, as I mentioned before, this program is limited to participating state and nonindustrial private tree nurseries. This does

not exclude Forest Service and industrial nurseries from participation at their own expense. During the program's life, Syracuse University personnel will be making circuits through the west to collect samples. One such circuit is to take place, right after this meeting, to cover the interior west. Another one will cover the Pacific west in September. It seems to me to be a good opportunity to have these fellows actually visit your nursery, get to know you, collect the samples, and show you how to do it in the future.

The incentives to have the tests done by Syracuse are the standardization of the soil analysis procedure and expert interpretation of results. I understand that, in state nurseries in the northeast which have worked with Syracuse several years, resultant savings in fertilization costs have more than paid for the soil tests.

So, if any of you are interested in more information on the subject, I suggest you talk to Pete Solan or me. Also, there are brochures on the Syracuse soil testing services available at the back of the room. They are the bright yellow ones.

In promoting these soil test services, I do not intend to cast aspersions on other soil test labs. The crux of the issue is standardization of test procedures so we can all interpret results and fertility guidelines on a common basis. This will allow nurserymen to more accurately fulfill the nutritional needs of their seedlings. Once analytical procedures are standardized, growth response results can be correlated with fertility levels, species, and soil types. This is the key to evolution of accurate species by species nutritional guidelines.

THE FOREST TREE NURSERY SOIL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

The other program I want to briefly discuss today is the planned forest tree nursery

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soils management workshop to be held in Syracuse in late July of 1980. I think many of you have already received a tentative agenda. For those of you who have not seen it, there are copies available at the back of the room. Attached to those copies is a form you should fill out and send to Syracuse if you are interested in receiving more information about it.

Now, this soils management workshop was generated at the suggestion of Stu Slayton, nurseryman at the Forest Service's Wind River Nursery in Washington. The logic of the suggestion was so sound that everyone around the country thought it an excellent idea. The workshop goals are to provide:

1. A review of soil management basics.
2. Information on the relation of seedling growth to soil management activities.
3. A review of soil testing and analysis procedures.
4. Insight into interpretation of soil test results.

We are attempting to assemble the strongest possible faculty for the workshop. It is to be highly structured, with a workbook, a textbook, self-tests, and a printed proceedings. Certificates of attendance will be provided and college credit will be available, at the

attendee's option. The Forest Service and the State University of New York will be serving as sponsors of the workshop. Also, if approved by the cooperating state, one nursery staff member from each bare-root state nursery will be able to attend. This attendance will be facilitated by state-federal cooperative funding.

One key point about the workshop is that we intend to keep the perspective of the work as practically-oriented as possible. Presentations by, and panels made up of, nurserymen will be interspersed throughout the agenda in an attempt to relate the academic presentations to "real world" tree nursery problems. It promises to be a good learning experience. Those western nurserymen attending will have an opportunity to "rub elbows" with tree nurserymen from all over the United States and Canada and, also, the top researchers and teachers in the nursery soil management field.

At present, attendance has not been limited. If the size of the group becomes too large we intend to split up into more than one section and have lectures repeated.

I hope as many of you can attend, when the time comes, as possible. I think the workshop will be particularly valuable to those just learning the tree nursery game, but it should also be useful to "old-timers" as a refresher and update. Please plan to attend, if possible. The dates are July 28-August 1, 1980. To my knowledge, this does not conflict with any meeting of nurserymen elsewhere.