

A SURVEY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOREST NURSERIES WITHIN THE COUNTIES OF THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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Abstract: In order to boost planting of trees into urban settlements, a survey among all the state of Rio de Janeiro counties revealed that all counties which answered the survey expressed the desire to offer seedlings to its local population. The common difficulties pointed were the lack of seeds and the need for technical assistance.

Introduction

The State of Rio de Janeiro has led Brazilian economy until the late 50's with cycles of sugar cane, coffee and orange. As a result of intensive agriculture, clearing of land especially that covered by the Atlantic Forest has drastically reduced the natural protection of slopes, watersheds and agricultural lands (Brito and Innocencio 1988). To revert such trend it is necessary that local government and citizens agree on the benefits as well as on the costs of planting growing trees on public and on private lands. During the past decades most of the state's natural beauty comprised by the Atlantic Forest (Magnanini 1965) has been removed to a value of about 8% of the original cover due to its location within a zone of high population density in Brazil, and, consequently, prone to urbanization and industrialization pressure.

The necessity of tree planting at both rural and urban environments has been recognized by different government levels; however, it was not until the state government began to receive

its share from offshore petroleum wells that financial support was allocated to "green up" the state. Due to the fact that private ownership comprises most of the land in the state, the counties are to be used as educational centers in order to disseminate the necessary practical training.

Materials and Methods

In order to encourage planting of trees into urban and rural settlements, a survey was performed among all counties by means of mailed questionnaires; although it is recognized that some regions have more land devoted to rural enterprises than others (Figure 1) no discrimination was performed. The objectives of the questionnaire were to qualify and quantify: 1) the county government commitment to establish a forest tree nursery in order to provide seedlings for its citizens; 2) to acknowledge those counties that already have initiated forest seedling production; 3) to reveal the potential use of tree planting as seen by the county government; and 4) **to** establish a link between the forest county agent, or equivalent, and the future State Forest Seed Center.

Results

There were 28 replies from the 52 questionnaires mailed out. All of the counties which answered the survey, independent of the region within the state, expressed the desire to offer seedlings to its local population. To achieve such goal the most common difficulties expressed were the **lack** of seeds and the need for technical assistance.

Forty percent of the counties have declared the existence of some form of forest nursery with areas that range from 800 to 80,000 square meters. The foreseen uses of trees on the

municipalities include urban and rural site amelioration, recuperation of degraded areas, establishment of green belts around factories, improvement of river banks and reservoirs, and implementation of areas for environmental education.

The results of the survey support not only a closer technical assistance by the state government to the counties but also the implementation of the State Forest Seed Center (Malavasi and Malavasi 1988), to be established in Santa Maria Madalena county. The Seed Center will be responsible for collecting, processing, and distributing forest seeds as well as nursery personnel training within the State of Rio de Janeiro.

References

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FIGURE 1: Percentage of rural land within the six regions of the of the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

