CONE CUTTER

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Good coniferous seed depends on the cone collector making cut tests on several cones from each tree before picking begins. The cone cutter should be lightweight, pocket-sized, and safe and simple to operate. The homemade cone cutter (see illustration on following page) is patterned after one first made by Homer Ward, Nurseryman, State of Washington Department of Natural Resources. It is made from a piece of metal conduit,
ik saw blade, hardwood and rivets for handle, and a bolt to hinge the blade. Best results are obtained when the blade is kept sharp and the cone is cut lengthwise through the center with its tip facing away from the handle. A dull blade will compress the cone and make a ragged cut. This results in an inaccurate seed count. Cone collectors and buyers make cut tests to:

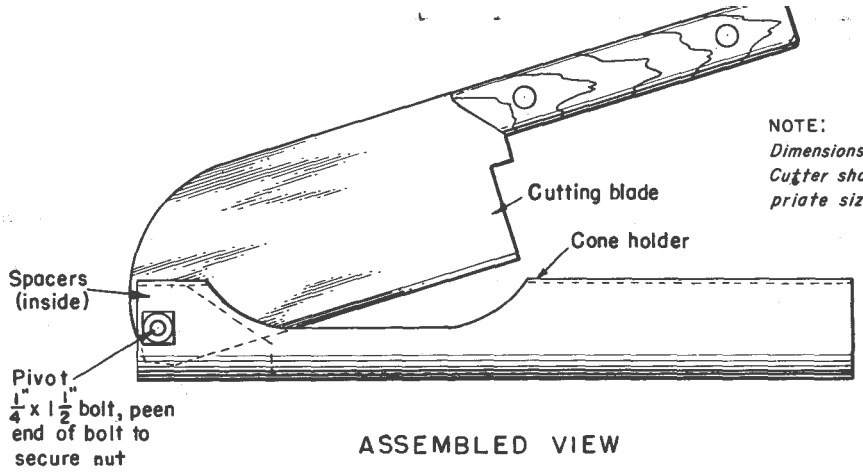
(1) Determine seed maturity.

(2) Determine the seed count of a cone.

(3) Observe cone quality (pitch, worms, etc.).

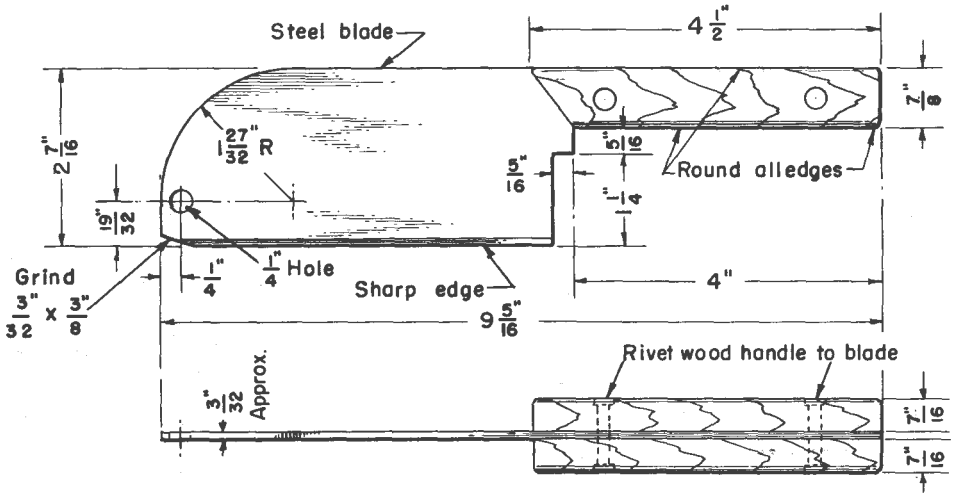
Tests for maturity start about the first of August. To be sufficiently mature, seed must be ripened beyond the "milk" stage and contain a solid white kernel. The seed count is determined by the number of sound seed kernels exposed by the cut on either half section of the cone. Seed count requirements vary with the species. Cone buyers usually require not less than six seed counts for Douglas-fir.

In the Pacific Northwest, cone picking usually starts in the middle of August for lower elevations and continues to early November for high elevations.

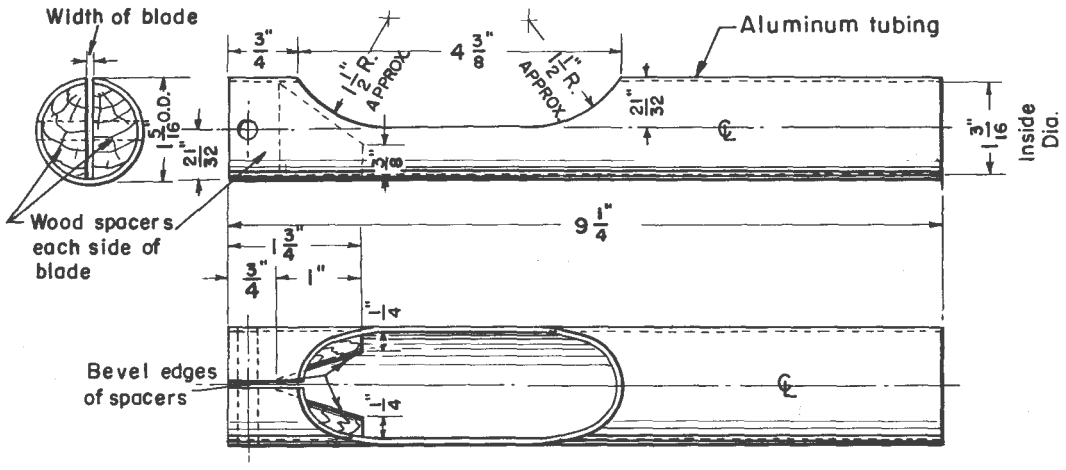


NOTE:
Dimensions shown are proportionate. Cutter should be built to an appropriate size for cone.

ASSEMBLED VIEW



DETAIL OF BLADE



DETAIL OF CONE HOLDER