

TREES FOR RECLAMATION IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

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The Alabama Forestry Commission promotes reclamation through forest resource education providing seedlings for reclamation and assistance to industry and landowners. Approximately 85% of the lands mined in 1979 will go into forest production. Good forest management on reclaimed lands will enable Alabama to meet its future demands for forest products.

Since the inception of the Alabama Forestry Commission in 1969, it has been charged with the responsibility of public education of the people in Alabama concerning timber and forest and other natural resources of Alabama. Educational efforts have been geared toward informing the general public of the role of forestry and how it benefits first the landowner and secondly the state.

The ultimate determinate of post mining land use is the goal or goals of the landowner. We must honor their rights or ownership and it is our hope that through a more enlightened public that landowners will choose forest management as a viable alternative in post mining land use. This is, in fact, what is happening. Of the 28,528 acres permitted for surface mining in 1979, approximately 85% of the land will be planted to a forest species.

Assistance is being provided to landowners and industry alike through the Alabama Forestry Commission specialist group. A program designed to give foresters with the Commission an opportunity and flexibility in their work schedules to address particular areas of forestry. Tom Kimbrell, the state surface mine specialist, works with both landowners and industry on specific problems they may have. Tom is also working to establish plantations of *Paulonia* (*Paulonia*

tomentosa), an invader species on many Alabama mine spoils. *Paulonia* is being exported to Japan where it is used to produce a high quality veneer.

The State Nursery has long contributed to Alabama's reclamation effort by producing high quality pine seedlings for reforestation. The vast majority of the reclaimed lands that go into forest production have been regenerated to one of the major yellow pine species, that is, loblolly pine, longleaf pine, shortleaf pine and virginia pine. The Commission's nursery goal for the 1980-81 season is to produce 80 million pine seedlings. At this level of production, there should be no immediate problem meeting the states overall needs for pine seedlings in the coming seasons. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, our nursery section will be able to add to those species already being produced a number of other species that will be beneficial for improving wildlife habitat and reclamation.

The Commission's improved seedling program is young by many standards, but it is a bright ray on the horizon. Gains in both volume and quality are expected from improved seedlings from Alabama's own orchards. Our improved seedlings show promise of increase in volume production of 15-20% from first generation seedlings. Quality factors such as straightness, small knots and branching angle

are more difficult to quantify, however, we expect also a 15-20% increase in quality factors from the improved seedlings. Alabama's 351 acres of pine seed orchards range in age from one to twelve years. These orchards are now producing about twelve million improved seedlings a year - 1/5 of the states needs.

Seedling orders now have to be prorated, allowing no single landowner more than 20% of his total order to be improved seedlings. It is our aim to be producing 100 million improved seedlings from our improved seed orchard by 1990.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the good reclamation effects us all, no matter what area of forestry we are pursuing. It is a fact that some of our best timber lands are going into agricultural production and that the demand for forest products will increase in coming years. If we belittle the productive capability of reclaimed lands and pass off reclamation as having only cosmetic value or just a practice to save the conscience of the general public, we will be neglecting a valuable resource. A resource that will be needed if our nation's future demand for wood products are met.