

Trees grown in pots do best as seedlings

Trees do right well when "potted," according to 10 years of experiments at The Pennsylvania State University. In recent years, the growing of Christmas trees in tiny pots for later transplanting has become

big business. In 1973, for example, about 28 million seedling trees in the United States were grown in small pots much like flowers and vegetables. In 1974, an estimated 42 million container-grown trees were

produced in the Pacific Northwest alone. Such containers, often made of paper or plastic, reduce the shock occurring when seedling trees are transplanted as bare-rooted nursery stock. This im-

proves the first and second year growth in field plantings, says Edgar H. Palpant of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Penn State. Palpant believes the container systems compete costwise with the older nursery system using bare-rooted seedlings. He favors the new systems, especially when superior genetic seeds are planted. Idaho Douglas fir seeds, for example, are producing plants that may be 15 inches tall by the end of the first growing season, growth he terms excellent. Palpant is research assistant in forest genetics at Penn State.

In the 1975 genetic studies, Scotch pines planted one tree per pot — and grown with an undisturbed ball of soil — averaged 72 per cent taller than trees grown 4 and 5 per pot or grown in a nursery and transplanted with bare roots. The plastic or paper pots are 3 to 4 square inches in size.

One containerized system features paper pots developed in Japan. Another system uses semi-translucent plastic pots. Known as the "book planter system," the latter has advantages of providing easy removal of the plant and its miniature ball of roots and soil. The "book planter," so named since its sides open like a book, is best for species such as Douglas fir which grow poorly under wet conditions in paper pots.

Survival of seedlings in the latest study averaged nearly 100 per cent — much better

than for bare-rooted seedlings on poor sites. Palpant indicated the new container systems can produce quality seedlings in nearly half the time required with the older bare-rooted system. But he said the new technique involves more than containers. Proper light, soil conditions, moisture, and nutrients are vital.

"Of course it is essential that seed of proper genetic and physical properties be used. Otherwise, the best greenhouse or nursery cultural techniques can not

overcome the major deficiencies of poor sites and lack of genetic quality," he affirmed.

Two different soil mixtures were used for seed planted March 18, 1975. One mix consisted of peat and vermiculite. The other used decomposed leaf litter and perlite. The seed was treated with a fungicide and then treated weekly with a liquid fertilizer, 9-45-15, for about a month. Then the treatments were shifted to a 30-10-10 fertilizer. Since July the seedlings have been treated weekly with ammonium sulfate.

Seedlings available in Berks Co. area

Landowners of Berks County are reminded that now is a good time to plan for tree planting in the Spring of 1976. The Glatfelter Pulp Wood Company, Spring Grove, Pennsylvania, will share on a 50-50 basis the cost of seedlings with interested landowners.

Since the inception of the Glatfelter program in 1951, more than 15½ million seedlings have been furnished to landowners in 13 southcentral Pennsylvania counties.

Tree seedlings available this year are white pine, red pine, Austrian pine, Virginia pine, pitch pine, Norway Spruce, white Spruce, Japanese larch, black locust and European alder. Orders are filled on a first-come, first serve basis so it is

important to get orders in early.


All seedlings are furnished by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources. The Glatfelter Company imposes no restrictions of any kind, but landowners planting these trees must comply with state regulations covering these seedlings.

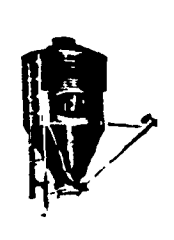
If you are a landowner in this county who would like to plant tree seedlings in 1976, act now! To obtain information on placing your order stop at your County Agricultural Extension office located at Cooperative Extension Service Berks County Agricultural Center Leesport, Pa. 19533.


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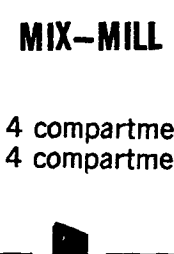
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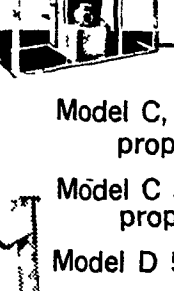
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