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### TREE FARM BULLETIN, February 2008

Greetings,

Every year the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee selects a Tree Farmer of the year. This award recognizes a Tree Farmer who has shown a commitment to managing their land in a manner dedicated to sustaining the forest and all the benefits that are derived from the forest, including water, wildlife, and wood. Here in New Mexico, we are somewhat limited in what we can do with the forest commercially. Unfortunately most of our sawmills have gone out of business so it can be difficult for a landowner to sell products. The Tree Farm Committee recognizes this so many times our Tree Farmers of the year are recognized for the non-commercial work they have done in their forest. The Tree Farm began back in the 1940's and as the name implies it was originally a program to encourage landowners to "farm" their trees for the commercial benefit that could be derived from them. Procurement foresters for large sawmills and pulpmills were concerned about having a continual supply of logs for the mills and were looking for a way to recognize and organize small private landowners who owned a large percentage of the forest.

Small private landowners still own a majority of the forest land nationwide but the goals of the Tree Farm program have expanded and are no longer directed primarily at timber production. Nowadays forests are recognized as providing critical habitat for wildlife and as the source of much of our water resource. Forests are also recognized as providing aesthetic enjoyment in our increasingly urban world and as a connection to the natural world.

The Tree Farm program and Tree Farmer of the Year award are designed then to recognize landowners who are protecting their land and ensuring that it will be there for future generations. They may or may not be selling a commercial product. Size doesn't matter. A Tree Farm can be 10 acres up to 10,000 acres. The Tree Farm program believes that it is the work being done on the ground that is important and the efforts of the individual Tree Farmer and their dedication to sustaining the land that are important.

## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

**What kind were the earliest known trees on earth?** They were unlike any types of tree growing on earth today. Each tree was a composition of a fern that had taken the form of a large tree, and a tree which bore a strange kind of seed. Thus, these first trees known to have grown on earth are called *Eospermatopteris*, a Greek word which says in English: Dawn-seed-fern.

**What is the United States Forest Service?** A division of the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service has its headquarters in Washington, D.C., but most of the organization is in field service throughout the forty-nine states and Puerto Rico. There are five divisions: Administrative and Information; National Forest Administration; Land Acquisition and Forest Land Planning; State and Private Forestry; Forest Research.

**On what basis should today's owner select his home tree?** Before selecting a home tree the owner should ask himself what need he wishes his tree to fill. Does he want it for shade or for decorative flowering? For edible fruit or to attract birds? Does he want a standard-size tree or a dwarf? Evergreens or trees with colorful autumn foliage? Or trees with branch patterns to add interest to the solitude of winter? Thought should be given to the location. Does it offer growing space or will the tree be confined in a small suburban yard? Is this tree to be planted in the city, on the street, or in the country? What are the demands of the tree for food, water, light and air? And once the tree is planted and growing, how much upkeep will the tree need?

**How many different products come from trees?** The products from trees are countless, it is estimated that there are over nine thousand uses for paper and paper pulp alone.

**How are tree diseases contagious?** By wind or insects carrying the germs from tree to tree; and by organisms causing Dutch elm disease, oak wilt, and so on, moving from tree to tree through root grafts. This kind of underground communication has recently been found to be of common occurrence. In one test of a stand of pine, red dyes and radioactive chemicals introduced into freshly cut stumps turned up a day or two later in the sap of nearby trees. It was found that about half of the pines had established natural root grafts with other trees.

**How does a tree create wood?** When growth slows down, the walls of the cells on the inside of the cambium film harden with the addition of lignin and other chemicals, their protoplasm disappears, and they turn into dead wood cells. At the same time a marvelous job of conversion takes place in the cells on the outside of the cambium film. Here most of the cells are thickening their walls with cellulose, but not with lignin; they are keeping their protoplasm but nuclei disappear. They are alive but not dynamic. These cells are lined up end to end. Where they touch, the ends form plates set at diagonals, as though mortised by a carpenter. These are perforated so that strands of protoplasm flow between them. They are called sieve tubes and they serve as supply lines of food: a continuous course from the leaves, where food is manufactured, all the way to the roots.

