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TREE FARM BULLETIN, July 2009

Greetings,

Members of the Tree Farm System must be willing to cut trees. The Tree Farm System believes that forest management means actively managing a forest (cutting trees) for the benefits that are produced. An actively managed forest can improve water and soil, increase plant diversity, improve wildlife habitat and enhance the recreational experience. A well managed forest will have fewer insect and disease problems and can reduce the risk of a catastrophic fire.

When there are strong markets for forest products commercial harvests can many times pay for these improvements and even produce a small profit for the landowner. Unfortunately in New Mexico, our logging and saw mill industries have been in decline for the past fifteen years. The last large production sawmill closed years ago and the small specialty mills that still exist have been impacted severely by the latest economic downturn. Compared to fifteen years ago only about five percent of our sawmill production still exists. No other large scale wood product operations have replaced this lost capacity.

This can make it difficult for Tree Farmers and other landowners to manage their forest property. As well as providing monetary support, most tree cutting operations need to remove woody material from the forest to reduce fire hazard and the risk of serious insect attacks. It can also be cost prohibitive to dispose of the woody material that arises from any cutting operation in the woods by piling and burning or chipping.

With the current economic situation it would be difficult to increase our sawmill capacity but when lumber demand picks up the sawmill industry can once again provide a market for the woody material that needs removal. Lumber is a relatively high value wood product and a sawmill provides a steady stream of waste wood that can be used for biomass, mulch, shavings, and other lower value products. Ultimately active forest management depends on being able to profitably remove products from the woods. A vigorous sawmill industry should be a vital part of any strategy to improve forest management in New Mexico.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

What trees were among these first families of Maryland? Most of the woods consisted of cycads, giant ferns, and the old *Auracaria*, the ancestor of the pines, but about 25 percent consisted of something sensationally new in trees. These were willow, poplar, oak, elm, sassafras, plus familiar accompaniments such as Virginia creeper, grape vines, and climbing bittersweet.

How is a wilderness area designated? By the Secretary of Agriculture, based on recommendation of the Chief Forester.

What is the difference between a large shrub and a small tree? No clear-cut distinction can be made. Sometimes plants under eight feet in height are called shrubs, and plants over twenty feet high are called trees. The clearest distinction is that shrubs usually develop several shoots from the root, growing from the base, while a tree develops a single stem or trunk and grows from its upper buds. Some trees, such as witch hazel, alder, and shadblow, may be a shrub in one place and a tree in another.

How is maple sugar made from the sap? By boiling it down. Sap, as it comes from the tree, is about 97 percent water. After this is boiled off, it leaves 3 percent sucrose (maple syrup). 3 ½ percent is a high yield. Further boiling of the maple syrup reduces it to maple sugar.

Does U.S. quarantine against foreign plant diseases prevent the import of many trees? The quarantine is strict. Even valuable bonsai trees from Japan cannot be imported without baring the roots and this may destroy them. But many trees and their seeds can easily pass inspection, and certain authorized imports can get permits.

Does a tree have anything like circulation of blood? No. Its vital fluids are sap which is mostly water, in which minerals from the soil are dissolved along with plant sugar in solution. The sap moves upward from the roots through the wood of the trunk and limbs and into the leaves. The sugar in solution moves down from the leaves and circulates through the tree *via* the sieve tubes just beneath the bark. But this is not blood or a circulation pumped by any organ like a heart.

Platt, Rutherford 1992. 1001 Questions Answered About Trees. Dover Books. 318pp.