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## TREE FARM BULLETIN, November 2008

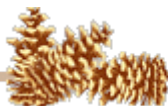
Greetings,

Last month I had the opportunity to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> National Tree Farmer Convention in Portland, Oregon. Portland is the birthplace of the Tree Farm System, a group of industry foresters held a series of meetings at the old Portland Hotel 67 years ago to organize the Tree Farm system. The Clemons Tree Farm in Montesano, Washington was designated as Tree Farm number one. Since then, the Tree Farm system has grown to almost 100,000 Tree Farms in 46 states with close to 20,000 volunteer foresters involved in the program.

The convention was attended by over 400 Tree Farmers and foresters. There were a wide range of concurrent sessions people could attend. Some of the subjects were marketing your timber, improving song birds and cavity nesters habitat, partnering for public tours, carbon markets for Tree Farmers, woody biomass and renewable energy update, a report on the 2008 Farm Bill, preserving working private forests, and more. Sessions were well attended and indicate the wide range of forest management issues facing Tree Farmers.

The highlight of the convention was the field day at the Little Beaver Creek Tree Farm near Forest Grove, Oregon. This 600 acre property has been intensively managed for the past 35 years by owners Anne and Richard Hanschu. This property has been harvesting about 500,000 board feet of high quality Douglas fir logs per year during this 35 year period. That's about 100 truck loads per year. In the Northwest they plant trees extensively after harvest to reforest. Once this new stand begins they will thin it about every twenty years. After about 80 years of growth it will then be clear cut and the process will start again. They had a demonstration logging project for the field day. They were thinning 60 year old Douglas fir that averaged 20" in diameter and were 130 feet tall! It's amazing what a little moisture and soil can do for tree growth. For comparison here in New Mexico a well- growing Douglas fir might be 12" in diameter and 60 feet tall after 60 years.

Next year the 16<sup>th</sup> Tree Farm Convention will be held in Washington D.C. No doubt there will be a field day to a Tree Farm in Maryland. Tree Farms there are in the path of urban development and no doubt are not managed for timber production. The two convention sites represent the diversity of the Tree Farm system. What ties us all together is our desire to protect our forest resource.





(15<sup>th</sup> National Tree Farmer Convention in Portland, Oregon)

### HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

**Would those trees of the Coal Age look familiar to us?** Yes, in part. Some of the types have survived to our day but not as large trees. Some of those earlier types were trees with tall, straight, fluted trunks like columns of a Greek temple – related to the little horsetail plants of our day. Others were stocky with thick trunks covered with overlapping scales instead of bark – related to our clubmosses. The tallest tree of the Coal Age forests, although greatly outnumbered by the horsetail and clubmoss trees, was the most exciting innovation because it had real wood. It is named *Cordaites* from the Latin word for heart. The other trees did not have solid wood trunks; they were hollow or pithy, while *Cordaites* had wood and features like *Auracaria*, often seen as a house plant. It was probably the ancestor of the true pines.

**Who is the man on the spot with authority to manage the forests?** The ranger is the local manager who lives on the National Forest assigned to him, where he is in direct contact with the public and meets timberman, stockman, and camper, face to face. He supervises sales of timber, issues permits, measures products sold, establishes protection against fire, insects, erosion, and carries on planting programs.

**What home trees are characteristic of northeastern United States?** Among many, the flowering dogwood, red bud, ginkgo, oriental cherry, oriental magnolia, catalpa, hawthorn, apple, pin oak, red maple, shadblow, and cedar.

**Are maple trees cultivated to produce superior maple sugar?** No. This is one product which nature has produced better than man. It is a mysterious fact that trees must be grown from seed to produce good maple sugar. Second-growth wood has poor sugar sap.

**Does Florida moss harm the tree it grows on?** Florida moss is not a parasite. It is an air plant which derives its nourishment from the atmosphere. But it cuts off sunlight from leaves, thus reducing the food-making power of a tree. Moreover, it is a heavy plant, and in time its weight breaks branches. It likes oaks, especially the live oaks, and also fruit trees. In the South, orange growers consider Florida moss an economic hazard, and hire boys to pull it off the orange tree which otherwise could not fruit or grow normally because of cutting off sun from leaves. If kept under control so as not to get too dense or too heavy, it can be retained as a unique symbol of the South without destroying its trees.

**What are the life spans of some important American trees?** Bigger trees with harder wood mature slowly. An oak takes twenty years to mature its seed, and its average life is two to three hundred years. This is also true of hickory and walnut. An apple tree fruits after five to eight years and it is often old and feeble in forty years. Maple is intermediate, seeding in twelve to fifteen years, and old in fifty to seventy-five years. Birches are old at forty. Maximum ages far exceed these limits. Some oaks may live 1,500 years.

Softwoods (or evergreens) are longer lived than hardwoods because of resin and turpentine substances in the wood which help them resist decay and insect attack. Sequoia appears immune to pests and bark is fire-resistant – so it normally lives five hundred years or more. The General Sherman is over 3,000 years. Some junipers may live 2,000 years. Pines as a group live from 100 to 600 years.

An individual tree's life span is not scheduled like that of an animal which can run around and find conditions to preserve life. A tree must stand and take it, and is therefore more vulnerable to changes in climate, moisture, soil, and temperature.

