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TREE FARM BULLETIN, December 2007

Greetings,

As we approach the holiday season I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. In the New Year I hope to be announcing some new initiatives that will strengthen our Tree Farm program. You may recall that the American Forest Foundation received \$150 million as a result of the Canadian Softwood Lumber agreement. This money has been earning income in a trust fund for the last year. Some of these earnings are now beginning to trickle down to state committees nationwide. It will give us more resources to spread the word about sustainable forestry and hopefully make the program more meaningful for Tree Farmers.

Predictions are still for a mild and dry winter but our late fall weather has been anything but mild and dry. Higher elevations in the northern mountains have received up to six feet of snow in the last two weeks so we're on our way to a good snow pack. Let's hope it continues.



HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

How long have trees been growing on earth? The first definite evidence of trees on earth goes back 300 million years, to a time which geologists call the Devonian Period.

How does silviculture differ from horticulture? Horticulture is the science of producing special plant types, for flower and vegetable gardens, and ornamental and orchard trees. Silviculture is concerned with the growth and health of forests.

What were some of the typical shade trees of fifty years ago? American elm, oak, sugar maple, horse chestnut, linden, sycamore, ash, catalpa, walnut, cottonwood.

What is the most all-around useful kind of tree? The coconut palm, growing along tropical rivers and shores. It provides food, drink, clothing, shelter, shade and beauty.

How do insects damage trees? They eat leaves, sometimes defoliating the tree. They bore into the trunk, admitting the bacteria of decay. They spread disease by carrying the spores of fungi.

What part of the tree is alive? A thin film of cells just beneath the bark enclosing trunk, branches and roots. This sheathing, called cambium, is only one or a few cells thick, and is invisible to the naked eye. Other living cells are at the tips of roots, and in leaves and buds.

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

FIRE DANGER INCREASES

The National Weather Service is predicting dry, warm weather across the Southwest in the upcoming months, and thus, the potential for dangerous fires is expected to increase.

“According to National Interagency Fire Center Predictive Services, current and projected moisture deficits, continued drought conditions and periods of low relative humidity are currently contributing to elevated fire danger,” stated at press release from the Carson National Forest.

During the fall, raking leaves and other cleanup projects are abundant. However, caution is advised when any debris is burned. Burning tips include keeping a water source nearby, being mindful of the weather and refusing to burn during windy days.

