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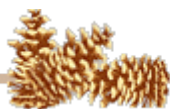
TREE FARM BULLETIN, December 2008

Greetings,

Your New Mexico Tree Farm Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



New Mexico Tree Farm Committee: (back row, left to right) Debra Thrall-Pierce (member), Doug Boykin (adviser), Charlie Wicklund (treasurer), Joe Stehling (vice-chair), Harry Morrison (chair), Travis Vigil (member) and Luke Holden (member); (front row, left to right) Mary Stuever (member), Lindsey Quam (member), Jessica Ouzts (member), Todd Haines (member), Andrew Frederick (member) and Arnie Friedt (member).



HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

Are any trees now living on earth the same kind as trees which grew in the Coal Age more than 200 million years ago? Near the close of the Coal Age two seed trees appeared, which we call cycad and ginkgo. The cycad is a palm-like tree which grows in Florida where it is known as comfort root and coontie, but it is more prominent in the southern hemisphere. A cycad can be seen in botanical gardens where it is known as sago palm. The ginkgo is a familiar tree of our big city streets and parks.

Is cutting of trees forbidden in National Forests? The cutting of trees is encouraged, but under regulations that will promote the health and continuation of the National Forest and its resources, including watershed, camping, fishing, hunting, and even grazing. The Forest Service was born in 1905 with instructions issued by the Secretary of Agriculture which included: "All the resources of the forest reserves are for use, under such restrictions only as will insure the permanence of these resources."

What home trees are characteristic of southern states? Yaupon, silverbell, crape myrtle, American holly, princess tree, flowering dogwood, redbud, peach, southern magnolia, loblolly pine, persimmon, and pecan.

How old must a maple tree be before it produces? Twenty years old for profitable tapping. At that age a single tap may be made. The foundations of maple sugaring rest on hundred-year-old maples, perhaps seventy feet tall and with diameters of 2 to 4 feet.

How can a mushroom kill a tree? The most lethal tree disease results from a parasitic fungus, a kind of mushroom plant with no chlorophyll. Since it cannot cook its own food from air and water, the fungus must live on food made by green plants. It gets inside a tree and become a parasite.

A mushroom is best known for the temporary umbrella which it raises to throw out spores (microscopic cells that reproduce the plant) while the body of the plant consists of cottony threads. For the common mushroom these are hidden in the ground. The parasitic fungus we are thinking about has a body of soft, flexing threads which grow inside the pores of the wood or in the tree's food canals (phloem) of leaf and bark. The fungus permeates them, choking them so that the water or sap contained in tree's food cannot flow.

How have trees moved around to reach their sites on the face of the earth? Seeds have enabled trees to march around the world through the ages. Inside the seed is the miniature of its parent—a tiny leaf, stem and root. This is packed with food on which it can live while traveling, and wrapped in a package easily transported by wind, water, birds and other animals.

Pine, maple, elm, ash, ailanthus and birch seeds have wings to ride the winds. Acorns and nuts are transported by squirrels. Birds eat berries and disperse their seeds. Floating coconut and mangrove seeds ride the seas.

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

