

THE FORESTER'S HANDBOOK

by H.L. Edlin.

Published by Thames & Hudson. 395 pp. 35/-.

THE publication of a new Handbook covering the entire field of forestry is something of an event, especially as so many changes have occurred in methods, costs, prices and the legal position since the last publication of a comparable nature before World War II. Few have the necessary contacts with all aspects of forest management together with the industry and the literary facility which combine to make this work by Mr. Edlin at once practical, comprehensive and easily digested.

Most of the technical information will be familiar to the professional forest officer who has access to all the publications of the Forestry Commission and the various Journals. This book is rather intended for the forester, landowner and land agent who cannot hope to keep up with the spate of detailed technical publications. The attractive layout and illustrations and the simplicity and directness of the text as well as the extremely comprehensive coverage of the subject should ensure its popularity in its own field. The chapters dealing with Management Plans, Financial Assistance and Taxation will be particularly welcomed.

Thirty five pages are devoted to "Seed Collection and Storage," and "Nursery work" and give a very good picture of this aspect of forestry bringing to the reader's attention recent developments in weed control, mechanisation and heathland nurseries.

Close on 70 pages are devoted to the assessment of the planting site, its preparation for planting, and choice of species. This is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of the forester's work to reduce to paper in clear and unambiguous terms—even for the student who has a solid grounding in Geology, Soil Science and Ecology. It is well nigh impossible within the limits set by the author and it is felt that the estate planter will be well advised to supplement his own judgments as to choice of species and mixtures with expert advice, especially when he has to deal with any of the more difficult sites.

Thinning is treated comparatively briefly—11 pages—the author confining himself mainly to general principles to be followed; but the table showing average number of trees per acre by species after thinning as against height of dominants will be found useful—especially to anyone who is in danger of being misled by reference to the old Yield Tables. The modern tendency towards earlier and heavier thinning is clearly illustrated in the table.

Felling, Measurement, Valuation and Marketing are adequately dealt with in succeeding chapters while the field of Protection is nicely summarised with references to sources of more detailed information where necessary.

The Chapter on “ Shelterbelts and Screens ” provides much interesting information particularly for the estate owner who has to get the most out of his land in the shape of livestock, crops and timber.

Many readers would welcome good drawings of the various specialised forestry tools—rutters, semi-circular spades, pruning and crosscut saws, lining-out board, etc.

The price may seem high by pre-war standards but for a technical publication of its size with a necessarily limited circulation, it cannot be regarded as unreasonable—in fact the book is very good value at the price.
