

## *Review*

# **Planting for Profit**

*Issued by "Trees for Ireland", 30 Westmoreland Street, Dublin.*

OVER the years, up to now, Irish Foresters have felt the embarrassment of having no adequate publication produced and written from this country, which they could recommend to the private planter who wanted general knowledge on the subject of raising trees, to supplement advice imparted by personal contact. The request for a book dealing with nursery work, planting, thinning and other aspects of forestry in a general way was a frequent one, and could only be met by recommending a book or a number of books, not always inexpensive, and usually written and published in Great Britain where, though Forestry conditions and practice may be similar, they are not by any means always the same.

In producing "Planting for Profit" in a most attractive and readable form, "Trees for Ireland" have not only met the Foresters' difficulty, but more importantly, will reach most people outside the ranks of professional Foresters who have enthusiasm, whether great or small, for forestry and tree planting, and the impact on increasing the number and extent of small forest lots should be considerable.

"Planting for Profit" is directed at the amateur planter, and estate owner who requires factual knowledge on the simple technicalities of forestry, and in this it should be very successful because it is comprehensive, clearly written and well illustrated by tables and examples. In offering certain criticisms of this book, the reviewer does so from

the point of view of the professional Forester, but does not attempt to detract from its essential merit in the context of the purpose for which it was written.

The chapter dealing with "The Trees" covers all the important species and some that are not. For instance, in the hardwoods, one might have wished for a fuller discourse on the silviculture of ash and sycamore—too important at the expense of hornbeam, lime and horse-chestnut, which are hardly likely to find a place in plantings for profit. In this chapter, too, fuller notes on the contemporary uses for the woods of various species would have been in place; for instance the utilisation for veneering of high quality straight trees is not mentioned in regard to oak, beech and sycamore although they command their highest value for this purpose, and the main present day use of ash for sports goods is not mentioned. The fact that ash, as a hardwood, is a comparatively fast grower and that it can be utilized in small sizes for sports goods and tool handles, makes it possibly one of the most economic hardwoods to grow—particularly for the private planter.

As a Forester, one is struck by the unevenness in nomenclature in the section dealing with conifers. For example, the current name in use for Japanese larch is *Larix leptolepis* and unless it has been very recently adopted again, it is some time since *Larix kaempferi* was in vogue. Although *Abies nobilis* is still in general use for the Noble fir, *Abies procera* is at present accepted and is correctly used in the text, but *Pseudotsuga Douglasii* is used for Douglas fir although *Pseudotsuga taxifolia* is now accepted and in use. While, doubtless, the author was moved by a desire to spare his readers from tongue twisters, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* is the correct nomenclature for Lawson cypresses, not *Cupressus Lawsoniana*, which is used in the text. However, here again, in the section for conifers the main objective is well attained and useful information for each species is conveyed.

Attention to contemporary utilisation might have been given, as in the case of Douglas fir in connection with which no mention is made of the fact that this tree is most valuable as a transmission pole for which a very good price can be obtained. Perhaps too, there are few Foresters who would agree that Grand fir (*Abies grandis*) is a wind resistant and storm firm tree but, no doubt, adjusted silviculture treatment might render it so, and it is a rewarding tree which deserves much more attention than it gets. On the subject of *Pinus contorta* we are left with far too rosy an idea of its ability to stand under exposed conditions, but of course as a shelter belt tree as distinct from a forest tree it can give good service on high and very exposed sites.

Though the capacity of various tree species to stand exposure is advocated so frequently, a chapter on shelter belt growing in particular, would have been of great value, as so many people who grow trees are concerned mainly with this aspect of silviculture.

The chapter on "The Home Nursery" is very good as might be expected from the author, but compactness would have been achieved by some brief notes on such collection, extraction and storage, particularly as it is not at all easy to purchase forest tree seed in small lots. The definition of the photographic reproduction in this section as elsewhere, is somewhat obscure for the detailed description of the particular operation described.

On the subject of "What to Plant", the author has wisely detailed description of site types, and has rightly emphasised that a great deal of knowledge and experience is necessary before species can be chosen with confidence. In fact, if this confidence is not possessed by the planter, he is best advised to call on professional advice at that critical stage.

Drainage, preparation of ground and planting are all well covered. The important operation of mounding is mentioned, but not described under "Drainage and Other Preparation of Planting Ground." Later the planting of a mound is described in the chapter on Planting in connection with what we know as mound draining. Here, a sod 2 ft. deep is cut out of the drain, inverted and planted "spreading the roots between the sod and the underlying ground." With a mound 2 ft. deep, a planter may find himself often having to bury the top parts of the plant if he is to follow the instructions. Confusion often exists as to the operation of mound planting, and further detail and illustration on this point would have helped to make the picture clear.

The use of the plough in planting to mound ribbons, a cheap and easy way to most farmers, is not emphasised sufficiently.

Great benefit will be derived by owners of small forest lots, from the chapter on "The Early Harvest, Marketing and Thinning", in which much practical advice is sounded off, by a set of stems per acre for height tables. Attention is commendably drawn to the harvesting of Christmas trees as a money making operation, which, for the time being at any rate, should be profitable to those producing quality trees.

Perhaps it should be said outside the context of this review, that considerable research which has been carried out in recent times (in Britain) suggests that the fresh stumps from thinnings are a potent factor in the spread of the disease *Fomes annosus*. Creosoting stumps immediately after felling is recommended as a measure of prevention of the disease and this is a job well within the capacity of the owner of a small woodland lot when thinning or taking out Christmas trees early in the life of a crop.

Having read the section on timber measurement, one should be well equipped to find the volume of a felled tree and estimate the volume of a standing one, but for an estate owner or anyone who has to estimate the volume of large numbers of standing trees, the Volume Tables are probably the best and most accurate means of estimation where there is reliable means of measuring height. The usefulness of Volume Tables

is outlined in the text, but it might have been mentioned that these tables are obtainable from the British Forestry Commission of Saville Row, London, and are regarded as being reliable for plantation grown conifers in this country.

The example of volume calculation (which does not appear to be quite correct) by the quarter girth system, focuses attention on this ludicrous method which is accepted in Ireland, as the way of finding the volume of wood our forest crops are producing, and one wonders what the amateur Forester will think of it. The example shows that a tree with a volume of 66 cubic feet, drops 11 cubic feet in volume when calculated by the quarter girth system, as an allowance "to cover losses in sowing". Such an allowance is quite out of line with continental forest services where true volume is used, and with modern utilisation where wood is so frequently processed, using every particle of wood in the trees. In the calculation the quarter girth volume should work out at 69.75 cubic feet, which would have given a difference of 149 cubic feet between true volume and quarter girth volume. On this subject, the mention of the conversion factors, true volume  $\times 0.875$  and quarter girth volume and quarter girth volume  $\times 1.273$  and true volume, might have been useful.

Since production in terms of volume per acre is discussed under "Yield of Timber", it might have been more useful to include simple examples of how to estimate volume per acre by the sample plot such as the square or triangular 1/10th acre plot.

In the marketing section, creosoting of fencing posts to prolong their life is recommended. It is presumed the type of creosoting meant, is that of surface application, but considerable difference of opinion exists as to whether worth while preservation is achieved in this way.

The £ s. d. of Forestry makes a good chapter, clearly explaining the use of compound interest making a good case for the forest crop in favourable growing conditions. The values used in the calculation are conservative, but not many investors nowadays would be satisfied with 5% compound interest.

Mr. Harbourn, Vice-President of "Trees for Ireland", pays a tribute in the foreword to the writer, Mr. H. M. FitzPatrick, which is richly deserved and difficult to improve upon. The reviewer can only say that in writing "Planting for Profit in Ireland", Mr. FitzPatrick has done a major service to forestry in this country where he has been an outstanding figure in that field for many years past.

All those concerned in getting "Planting for Profit in Ireland" published, deserve our warmest congratulations, and it must be great recompense for them to know as Miss Cahill, (Hon. Sec., "Trees for Ireland") informs me, that every one of the first 2,500 copies printed are on demand, and so well has the demand been maintained, that a further 2,500 copies are in press, and it is planned to publish 2,500 more copies later on. This is certainly an impressive achievement.

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