

Book Reviews

MANAGING SMALL WOODLANDS

Forestry Commission Booklet 46. H.M.S.O. 40 pages Price 90p

This booklet has been written primarily for the woodland owner: Its purpose is "to provide the basic information for the establishment and management of small woods emphasising ways and means of modifying forestry practice to adapt it to their needs". It is not a booklet on the classic foundations of forest management; it follows a much more practical approach dealing with the type of problems with which the woodland owner, who is not a trained forester, must cope in the day to day management of his property.

Chapter 1 deals with what might be termed the objects of management emphasising the need to draw up a plan which will take into account the potential of the woods and integrate proposals for woodland management into the plans for the property as a whole. The benefits available are outlined: Timber growing, Landscaping, Nature conservation, Sport and shelter. A short chapter on woodland types and possible courses of action gives some advice on how to handle over-mature woodland and coppice. This is followed by an equally short chapter on species selection with an Anderson type table on site classification and recommended species. Chapter 4 on crop establishment is mainly silvicultural as is chapter 7 on thinning. There is no attempt in either chapter to depart from what is generally considered to be the conventional approach to silvicultural operations. Planting espacement of 2 metres between rows and 2 metres between plants is recommended except where mechanical weeding with a tractor may be feasible. Then, it is suggested that a wider spacing between rows and a closer spacing between plants can be effected, giving the required 2,500 plants per ha. Line-thinning is recommended as the simplest form of first thinning, without comment on its possible association with windthrow on certain sites. Second and subsequent thinning can be "selective" thinnings. The use of average distance between trees expressed as a percentage of top height is recommended as a thinning index. This index, proposed variously by Hart and Becking in Holland and by Hummel in Britain deserves greater recognition as a simple and effective easily measured approach to thinning.

Chapter 5 gives an outline of protection measures against fire, animals and weeds as well as insects and fungi. It is noted that farm stock, particularly sheep, can cause serious losses and that pigs, horses and goats are liable to strip bark. Maintenance operations such as drainage, cleaning, brashing and pruning are dealt with briefly and it is interesting to note that the use of 2, 4, 5 — T is recommended as a stump treatment prior to planting, despite the opposition of many conservationists. The final chapter gives a brief description of the grant aid available in Britain. The source of this financial aid will vary with the objectives of planting. To qualify for a Forestry Commission grant timber production must be one of the primary objectives. Aid for amenity planting is available from the Countryside Commission and grants for shelterbelt planting come from the agricultural departments. Two schemes are available to the woodland owner; the Small Woods Scheme for areas less than 10ha and the Dedication Scheme — Basis III for areas over 10ha. information on both schemes is just adequate to give the owner a brief outline of what is involved.

The booklet is written in a simple, lucid style eminently suitable to woodland owners with a minimum knowledge of forestry. Although the content is limited in scope, a number of references at the end of relevant paragraphs will provide more detailed information for the reader who wishes to develop his interest. A complete

list of references is also provided. In a sense the booklet might be looked at as a posthumous tribute to H. Eldin who had written two chapters before his death and had prepared notes for others. His colleagues completed the booklet and the editor has done a fine job in achieving a consistent style and treatment. At 90p it is excellent value for the woodland owner.

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