

Letter

Dear Sir,

In his excellent article on Lodgepole pine in Vol. 37 (1) of this journal, John O'Driscoll quotes Veitch's Manual of Coniferae (1881) for the origin of the botanical name *Pinus contorta* Douglas, suggesting that he got the specific name from the curious branch form of dead trees of this species near Klamath Lake, Oregon. We have Douglas's own view of the tree in his journal (Douglas, 1914). This publication is not easily available, but the description of the tree has been quoted again by John Davies (1980) in his recent book on David Douglas. From this it is quite clear that he had a very poor opinion of the coastal form of the tree, which grows on sand dunes and rocky bluffs near the mouth of the Columbia River. The form is certainly contorted there, partly due to exposure to coastal storms. It would seem more likely that this is the origin of the specific name.

What we cannot now discover is whether David Douglas recognised the inland forms, now known as var *latifolia* and var *murrayana*, as being even the same species. He was quite familiar with Jack pine, *P banksiana* Lambert, from his earlier travels in eastern Canada and perhaps thought that the straight-growing inland varieties of Lodgepole pine were of this species.

As far as I can ascertain, David Douglas never visited the Klamath Lake region, as his travels in Oregon never took him so far south east and when he later based himself in California he travelled mainly in the coastal region.

Another point of interest in J. O'Driscoll's paper concerns his estimate of the loss in value from the bowed stems of the southern coastal origins. It is useful to have this properly quantified and my only reservation is that in addition to the loss in marketable timber value, trees with swept butts are more liable to later damage from wind and snow. Studies or basal sweep in British provenance trials show that there is a good positive correlation between tree height and incidence of basal sweep across a wide range of seed origins.

The task of the forest manager is to select origins which balance adequate vigour with an acceptable level of basal sweep, at the same time trying to reduce sweep by cultural practices.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Lines,

Silviculturist (North), Forestry Commission,
Roslin, Midlothian, Scotland.

REFERENCES

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