

FOREST AND WOODLAND ECOLOGY

F. T. Last and A. S. Gardiner (Editor) Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Cambridge 1981. 158 pp. ISBN 0 904281 511. Price UK£5.00.

The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE) was established in 1973 from the former Nature Conservancy's research stations and staff. It is one of fourteen sister institutes which make up the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). NERC finances most of its work which is conducted at seven stations located throughout Great Britain. This volume is an account of research being done in ITE. It contains 33 short papers providing a valuable update of current thinking on a wide range of topics of interest to all foresters. Most of the papers are easy to read, although the style is rather uneven. They are pitched at a level capable of understanding by those not expert in the field of specialisation discussed. To some, the research topics pursued by ITE may appear somewhat academic and irrelevant to the needs of British forestry. There is a place for the type of research done at ITE, complementing the more applied nature of Forestry Commission research.

There is a great deal in this book to stimulate the thinking forester. The suggestion that Sitka spruce stands can induce moisture deficits in previously moist sites within fourteen years of planting is food for thought. I found Cannall and Cahalan's detailed descriptive analysis of the components of shoot growth of conifers most interesting, opening up for me, as it did, an area of the literature of which I was only dimly aware. Growth is discussed at a different level by Ford in a paper covering tree structure under plantation conditions. To say that other useful papers cover a discussion

of the cost benefit of hedgrows, the role of buried seed in the recovery of ground vegetation in coppice wood and ongoing research on grey squirrel damage and management is to indicate the diversity of this publication and the scope of ITE research.

I would recommend this attractive publication to all foresters. It includes 26 plates, 21 of them in colour, it is well presented, with an extravagant use of space for a total of 59 figures. It is a particularly useful volume for students, providing the starting point for a host of valuable seminar topics and projects.

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