

Ballynakillew
Ballinrobe
Co Mayo

Dear Sir

Irish Forestry Vol. 35, No 1, 1978 carried a paper entitled "The Nursing of Sitka Spruce: 1. Japanese larch". That reported my experiment, planted in 1960, which established rigorously the capacity of both Japanese larch and lodgepole pine to effectively nurse Sitka spruce to improved growth on an infertile site. The origin of the lodgepole pine in that experiment was there given as Lulu Island, British Columbia, described as "not as fast growing or as heavy-crowned as the variety now used in Ireland, originating from the Washington and Oregon coastal region".

A later paper, "More on Nursing Mixtures" by M.L. Carey, R.G. McCarthy and H.G. Miller in *Irish Forestry* Vol. 45 No. 1 1988, identified the lodgepole pine as "inland". This puzzled me.

In September 2001 I had the opportunity to re-examine the experiment and I am satisfied that the "inland" classification is correct. At the time of my visit the trees were clearly of the inland variety. Many were dead or moribund, also a characteristic of some crops of inland lodgepole of advancing years in Ireland (and a condition not remote from the present writer).

The inland variety of lodgepole pine is also light-foliaged in its habit. I remain convinced that lodgepole pine of a south coastal provenance would have suppressed the Sitka spruce.

I have not been able to recall or reconstruct how my original wrong attribution came about, but bearing in mind that provenance information in the past was not always reliable, and that the 1978 paper has now entered the literature on a number of occasions, I have thought it appropriate to set the record as straight as may be possible. It is also to be borne in mind that the erroneous attribution does not in any way invalidate the main result of the experiment as published, particularly in relation to Japanese larch.

I do not know how institutional librarians normally deal with matters such as this, but I would ask readers to suggest to relevant librarians that they place a copy of this letter in a permanent manner at page 61 of *Irish Forestry*, Vol. No.1, 1978.

Yours sincerely

Niall OCarroll