



Reforestation Cutover Timberland

Pine... A Good Investment

Forestry Topics FT0004

April 2005

Cutover timberland can be made most productive by planting pine seedlings. However, for best results, the project should be carefully planned and the site prepared before planting. One year after planting, seedling survival should be checked and competing undesirable hardwoods controlled.

Planning

Before timber is sold, a forester should examine the property to determine which area should be cut and which areas should be retained for future volume growth. The forester can also assist with logging road layout. After the timber is harvested, the forester should examine the area to determine what will be necessary to prepare the area for planting.

After harvesting is completed and if cost-share assistance is desired, the landowner must file an application for assistance and receive approval before the project begins. The Virginia Department of Forestry will accept applications for Reforestation of Timberland (RT) assistance starting in May each year. Often there are other cost share programs available from other sources, and your local Department of Forestry personnel will have information on those programs.

Site Preparation

Preparing the site can be accomplished in several ways. The most common are: (1) prescribed burning; (2) drum chopping, followed by prescribed burning; (3) bulldozing;



Virginia Department of Forestry staff prescribed burns a cutover tract in preparation for planting.

and (4) herbicide application followed by prescribed burning.

Often, no site preparation is necessary. A DOF forester can determine the best option for your situation.

- 1) Prescribed burning to clean up logging debris can be successful on some cutover tracts. Prescribed burning is done between mid-May and mid-October.



Prescribed burning is an effective tool for cleaning up logging debris on some cutover tracts.

- 2) Drum chopping is a procedure to push over standing material and compacting it so the area can be prescribed burned. Drum chopping is accomplished with a bulldozer, pulling a rolling drum with blades. These blades break up the brush and small trees pushed over by the bulldozer. Drum chopping should be done between May and late September. Depending upon weather conditions, the tract can be prescribed burned three to eight weeks after the drum chopping has been completed.
- 3) Bulldozing, to pile logging debris, is usually done in the fall or winter months, but can be done any time of year.
- 4) Herbicide application is usually done from May to September. Depending on the herbicide used and weather conditions, the tract can be burned three to eight weeks after herbicide application.

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Planting

During the fall or winter following site preparation, seedlings should be ordered from the Department of Forestry. During the winter or early spring, the Department of Forestry will, at the landowner's request, assist with securing a planting crew, deliver the seedlings and inspect the planting. After the planting work is completed, the contractor will bill the landowner for the planting labor.

Some Department of Forestry services, such as planting coordination and site preparation, may require a fee. Contact your local forester regarding services that apply to your project.

If cost-share assistance has been approved for the project, payment will be made after the landowner has paid the contractor and Department of Forestry for expenses incurred.

Checking Survival

One year after the pine seedlings are planted, the tract should be examined for seedling survival and to what extent hardwood sprouts are competing with the planted seedlings.

About one-third of cutover tracts will need to have hardwood sprout competition controlled. The Virginia Department of Forestry can assist with coordination or may provide this service, for a fee, whereby the hardwood sprout competition will be sprayed and controlled with an herbicide.



Virginia Department of Forestry staff checks seedling survival and to see if hardwood sprouts are competing with the planted seedlings.

By following these steps you can convert your cutover timberland into a productive forest.



With planning and management, seedlings will be able to grow into a healthy forest in the future.

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