

Pine Seedlings Survive

Although a record dry start to 1972 threw into doubt the future of one-third of the 2,500 acres of new pine plantation scheduled for planting at Wanneroo by the end of last July, sufficient following rains enabled establishment with only minimal additional crop losses.

Due to the poor sandy nature of the coastal plantation areas and planting experience over the years, the planting period in northern plantations is restricted to a six-week period from June 15 to July 31.

Normally, all of this time is required to achieve the planting target figure.

The Wanneroo planting, by far the biggest area to be planted at any one location in 1972, was hit hardest, and could only be remedied by additional daily working hours.

It was impossible to greatly speed the rate of planting and because all machines were in use, additional manpower would have been of little value.

The next largest areas planted were 700 acres each at Kirup and Nannup. These centres normally begin planting on June 1, and sufficient rain fell to allow planting to proceed largely unaffected.

In the Wanneroo division, three or four inches of good soaking rain is required before planting.

Because of the need to re-establish a good root system to support the 9-12 inch high stem and crown before the soil dries out, young pines require more starting rains than cereals, which may be planted dry if necessary.

Over the years, experience has proven the wisdom of terminating planting on July 31. Last year (1971), when the wet season continued for longer than normal, later plantings would have survived. However, on other occasions two or three weeks of dry weather or an early close to the season has resulted in death of all late plantings.