GROWING PINUS RADIATA FOR THE TRADE

by

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Present trends in policy seem to direct all efforts into the channel of growing Radiata pine as quickly as possible to produce a volume in the log class that sits on the top of the price range. Considerable expense is incurred in the initial stages of management in this practice, and it would seem that if at the end of the rotation of these select stands there is no ready market for such logs they will be lost to a much lower price range offering at the time.

The purpose of this article is to suggest that a parallel plan could be put into practice with the object of producing a Radiata pine with a much lower individual annual increment, e.g. an annual ring width of 5 m.m. after five years. This could be attained by using our lower quality soils and planting at a 10' x 10' spacing to enable later cultivation and mechanical distribution of fertilisers, plus economical control of weed and scrub growths.

An ideal pine is a slender bole specimen of approximately 100 feet in height at 35 to 40 years producing over this period about 120 load per acre. This class of log is a very stable product for the furniture trade and laminated beams and trusses. In sizes and lengths varying from 7" U.B. Dia. crown to 12" U.B. Dia. crown and 7'0" to 16'0" in length there is a keen demand today and this will steadily increase with population growth.

In this class of production, pruning and thinning should be delayed until lower limbs have dried out to a height of 10 feet. Thinnings will then be done only as a control for stability and increment in conjunction with fertiliser application.

It is also essential that such stands be established within economical haulage distance of trade centres on country that has a reasonable topography for extraction.

Siting in relationship to topography is rather important if mechanical control of brush is forced on to the Forest

Department by such an authority as the Department of Environmental Control, which may at some future date be insturmental in bringing about a ban on the use of 2,4,5 T.

A planting space of 10 feet would also do away with some of the problems connected with second rotation.