

## Lets Get Growing: Pine Trees

Pine tree seedlings are planted in the winter in Louisiana when the seedlings are dormant. This reduces stress on the newly planted seedlings and increases the chances of survival. Planting by forest landowners generally takes place between the first of December and the end of February. Four species of pines are typically planted by Louisiana landowners. They are loblolly pine, longleaf pine, slash pine, and shortleaf pine.

Pine trees come from winged seeds produced and housed in the seeding bodies called pine cones. Pine trees have both male and female cones. Male cones are small and fall off the trees in the early spring shortly after pollinating the female cones. The cones that remain on the trees and produce the seeds are the female cones. The mature winged seeds fall out of the pine cone and helicopter down to the ground. These winged seeds are easily dispersed by the wind and often travel long distances from the parent tree.

Although pine trees can be grown from seed, forest landowners primarily grow pines from seedlings because seedlings have a better chance of survival and landowners can select the number and the distribution of seedlings planted per acre. Since a forest landowner may plant thousands of trees on their land, planting pine seedlings has become a specialized operation. Seedlings are either planted by hand using a specialized tool called a dibble bar or with a mechanized tree planter pulled behind a dozer.

Pine seeds are collected from pine trees grown in seed orchards just for seed production. Seed trees have been selected because of desirable qualities such as increased growth, disease resistance, and higher yields. Seedlings are grown from seed in large beds at tree nurseries until the seedlings are pulled from the beds for transplanting by forest landowners. Seedlings can be bare root or encased in a container as containerized seedlings.

## Planting and Care:



## Growth and Harvesting

Trees are usually not considered a crop because they are such a long-term investment. A stand of pine trees can take as long as 35 years to reach maturity. Pine trees are also unique among Louisiana's crops because the stands of trees require several harvests, called a thinning, to keep the trees healthy and growing. A stand of properly managed pine trees can add 3 to 8 tons of growth per acre each year.

The first thinning takes place when the trees start to outcompete each other for sunlight and this causes the trees to stop growing. In Louisiana this is when the trees are around 15 years old. Trees harvested from this first thinning are small and are used to make paper, oriented strand board, or pellets used to generate electricity.

Following the initial thinning harvest, additional thinnings take place every 5 to 7 years until the stand is mature. When the stand is mature, all the remaining trees will be harvested. These trees will be large and used to make premium forest products such as lumber, plywood, structural beams, and utility poles.

After the final harvest, the landowner will prepare the site for planting and will replant or reforest the site. This practice is called sustainable forestry and ensures that we will have an endless supply of trees and forest products for future generations. Professionals trained to manage the forest sustainably are called foresters. Trained professional called loggers harvest the trees. Foresters and loggers use Best Management Practices during harvests to protect the environment and wildlife.

## DID YOU KNOW??

TREES = LOUISIANA'S #1 CROP

FORESTRY MAKES A \$12 BILLION  
IMPACT EACH YEAR TO  
LOUISIANA'S ECONOMY

LOUISIANA LANDOWNERS PLANT  
6 TREES FOR EACH TREE CUT

TREES PROVIDE OVER 5,000  
PRODUCTS PEOPLE USE DAILY

MANY CHEMICALS USED TO  
FLAVOR YOUR FAVORITE FOODS  
AND DRINKS COME FROM TREES.  
EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

1. BLUE BELL HOMEMADE VANILLA  
ICE CREAM – FLAVORED BY  
IMITATION VANILLA EXTRACT.  
PRODUCED DURING THE PAPER  
MAKING PROCESS.
2. COCA COLA - FLAVORED BY  
KOLA NUTS. GROWN ON  
COLA TREES.

AMERICANS USE 3 POUNDS OF  
WOOD PRODUCTS PER DAY



SEED  
OF THE  
MONTH  
PINE TREE

JANUARY





