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From the Coordinator's Desk

by James Henderson, Extension Specialist
Your MSU Extension Forestry Program faculty and staff have had a banner year! The Extension Forestry Program was recognized with prestigious awards at both the national and the state level. Each year one Extension forestry program is recognized with the Family Forests Education Award which is cosponsored by the National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP), an organization made up of deans of university forestry programs from around the country, and the National Woodland Owners Association. Dr. George Hopper, Dean of the College of Forest Resources, accepted the 2014 award on behalf of the MSU Extension Forestry Program at the Society of American Foresters Annual Convention in Salt Lake City in October. Also, during the month of October, at the 2014 Mississippi Extension Service Annual Conference, the Extension Forestry Program was honored with the Team Outstanding Customer Service Award. All 13 members of the Extension Forestry Program were individually recognized for their contribution to the team (See photo). The program received further recognition from the MSU Extension Service when John Auel received the Outstanding Extension Professional Award and James Henderson received the Mark Keenum Outstanding Extension Faculty Award, which is sponsored by Southern AgCredit. In addition, Jason Gordon received the College of Forest Resources Extension/Outreach Award and the Early Career Achievement Award.

All of these awards are a reflection not only of the efforts of the members of Extension Forestry, but also of the outstanding county Extension agents with whom we have the privilege of working. In addition, this banner year of recognition was made possible because of your support of our short courses, workshops, county forestry association presentations, and Extension publications. The programs we offer are determined by you. Every time you complete a program evaluation, you tell us what you need. So, thank you for helping make this program a success!



WOODLAND OWNERS



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<https://twitter.com/MSUExtForestry>
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Feature Article

Christmas Tree Selection and Care

by John D. Kushla, Extension Specialist

Ho! Ho! Ho! It's that wonderful time of year again. As you prepare for the Christmas season, we're going to help with tips about tree selection and care in your home. Did you know that there are nearly two dozen farms growing real Christmas trees across Mississippi? All our growers operate choose-n-cut farms, where you select just the tree you want and cut it to take home. Find a farm near you at <http://www.southernchristmastrees.org/>.

Producers grow a number of fine Christmas trees here. These include the popular Leyland Cypress (See photo), which is very full but non aromatic. This is a great tree for those having allergies. Also popular is the Arizona Cypress, also known as Carolina Sapphire (See photo), a beautiful tree with pale blue foliage and unique scent. Then there are the traditional Virginia Pine and Eastern Redcedar. Virginia Pine has stout branches for large ornaments and excellent needle retention. The Eastern Redcedar has lovely green foliage and a wonderful aroma. If you prefer the Fraser Fir, which is grown in the southern Appalachian Mountains, many of our growers stock these pre-cut trees for sale also.

All real Christmas trees should be put in water immediately upon bringing home. Cut 1 inch off the base of the tree, then put it in a suitable tree stand. A real tree needs one quart of water per inch of diameter. Check the water level frequently the first day and daily thereafter. A fresh, real tree is less fire-prone than an artificial tree.

Install your Christmas tree away from heaters, windows, or fireplaces. Decorate your tree with miniature or LED lights, which release less heat. Replace old lights if the insulation is cracked. Buy new lights if the insulation is splitting. Do not overload your electrical outlets, and unplug the tree when leaving the house or going to bed.

Yes, you can enjoy a real Christmas tree this year, grown right here in Mississippi. Keep your real tree watered and use the miniature or LED lights. May you and yours enjoy this Christmas with a real tree.



Leland Cypress



Arizona Cypress

Photos Courtesy of John Kushla

2014 Awards



Extension Team Outstanding Customer Service Award
Extension Forestry



Extension Outstanding Professional Award
John Auel



Mark Keenum Outstanding Extension Faculty Award
James Henderson



CFR Extension/Outreach Award and Early Career Achievement Award
Jason Gordon

The world is big
and I want to have a good look at it
before it gets dark

--- John Muir

The Overstory Inconsistent Practices

by John B. Auel, Extension Specialist

The forest products industry in Mississippi is dedicated to ensuring our resources are managed in a responsible manner and that the benefits received from the forests will be enhanced for generations to come. This is the reason most of the forest products companies are certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). These companies, along with state and private organizations make up the Mississippi Implementation Committee (MIC) for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. One of the duties of this committee is to respond to concerns from the public about forest practices.

The MIC has an Inconsistent Practices Subcommittee. Their job is to address complaints received and make corrections where necessary to align the operation with SFI Principles. The most common complaints deal with incorrect Best Management Practices (BMPs) applied during logging operations. (BMPs are state guidelines designed primarily to protect water quality during harvesting, site-preparation, prescribed burning and pesticide application on forestlands.) However, any deviation from the SFI Standard can be reported as an inconsistent practice. You can find more information about the SFI Standard here: <http://www.sfi-program.org/sfi-standard-2010-2014/>.

A primary phone number has been established to handle all forestry complaints. For the year 2015 this number is 662-325-1785, a new number will be in place for 2016 and beyond. All complaints are confidential, but a caller can still request to remain anonymous. Once the complaint is filed, committee members, consisting of a forest products company representative, a Mississippi Forestry Commission representative, and a Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality representative make a field visit to inspect the site. Any identified issues are brought to the attention of all the parties involved in the operation from the landowner to the logger to the mill owner, and the inconsistent practice is corrected as soon as practical. For more information about inconsistent practices please contact John B. Auel at 662-325-7948.

Delta Hardwood Notes

by Brady Self, Extension Specialist

Managing Hardwoods for Acorns (Part 1)

One of the questions natural resource professionals regularly encounter from landowners during this time of year is, "How do I manage my hardwoods for acorns?" While management of an existing hardwood stand for acorn production is not an overly complicated process, the current mast crop cannot be influenced. As land managers, our influence over acorn production is a lengthy process and must be tackled months or years before significant increases will be observed.

Most individuals are concerned with acorn production (oak species), and pay relatively little attention to other hard mast species (e.g. hickories, walnuts, beech, etc.). Consequently, the focus of this short series of articles will detail methods that can be implemented by landowners in their efforts to increase acorn production in their forests.

Oak (*Quercus*) species are divided into two groups: red oak species and white oak species. There are several physiological differences, but this series will concentrate on acorn production. The most distinct difference between red and white oaks is the length of time required to produce acorns. Red oak acorns take 15 months (two growing seasons) and white oak acorns take three months (one growing season) to mature. If the twigs of red oak species are observed closely, you will notice small, immature acorns on this year's growth and mature acorns on last year's growth. The mature acorns were formed last year, and the smaller, immature acorns will be next year's crop. For this reason, sometimes red oak species have good acorn crops when white oak acorns are nonexistent due to a late freeze earlier in the year.

Make sure to read Delta Hardwood Notes in the next installment of The Overstory to continue learning how to manage for acorn production.



Acorn Development
Photo: Oregon State University



Red oak 2-yr acorn crop
(<http://snailstales.blogspot.com>)



Mississippi Timber Price Report

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERVICE

3rd Quarter 2014

The Mississippi Timber Price Report (MTPR) is a quarterly survey of stumpage timber prices in Mississippi. It is developed to provide a picture of timber market activity. The state average prices for common forest products are listed. Values given are offered as a guide to help individuals assess the fair market value of their timber. The average price should not be applied as the exact value for a particular tract. This report is updated quarterly and available at MSUCares.com/forestry, or by contacting your local county Extension office.

QUARTER'S PRICES: 3rd Quarter 2014 Stumpage Prices/Ton (Source: Timber-Mart South)

Pine Sawtimber - \$23, Pine Chip-N-Saw - \$14, Pine Pulpwood - \$7,
Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber - \$39, Hardwood Pulpwood - \$11

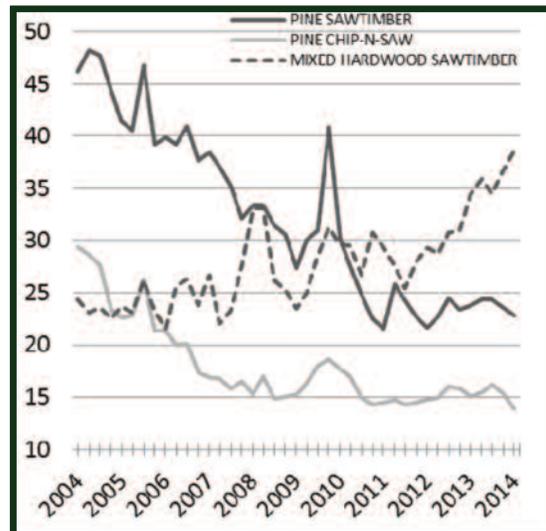
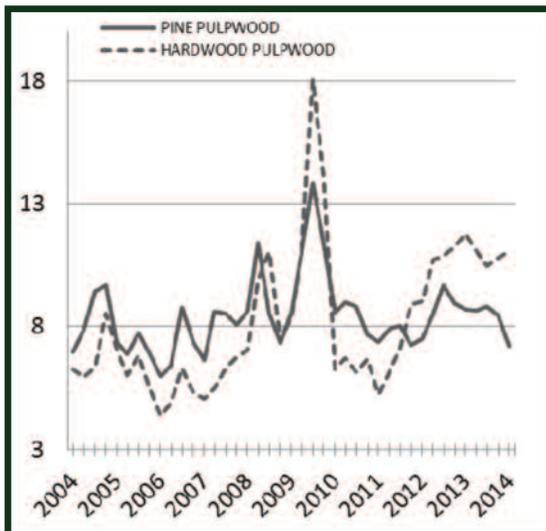
NOTE: Prices vary widely across the State; thus, average prices presented here may not reflect your local market.

WHAT'S MOVING PRICES - TRENDS:

Product prices declined over the 3rd quarter for all pine product categories and increased for all hardwood product categories. Pine stumpage prices decreased from the previous quarter by 2.9% for pine sawtimber, by 9.5% for pine chip-n-saw, and by 14.7% for pine pulpwood. Mixed hardwood sawtimber increased 5.1% and hardwood pulpwood increased by 2.6%.

TIME SERIES:

**Average Mississippi Pine and Hardwood Stumpage Prices
1st Quarter 2004 through 3rd Quarter 2014
(All prices in \$/TON)**



Timber-Mart South (TMS), Inc. has more detailed data available by subscription that contains values for other timber products not included in this report. TMS is compiled and produced at the Center for Forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank w. Norris Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See <http://WWW.TMART-SOUTH.COM/> for information on subscriptions.

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Please don't forget to check out our Blog at www.blogs.msucare.com/forestry and sign up for email notices!

Important Considerations for Planting Longleaf Pine

by John L. Willis, Extension Specialist

Once found extensively throughout the southeastern Coastal Plain, the population of longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris* Mill.) has declined dramatically over the past century. While several factors have been associated with this decline, previous human activities are thought to be highly influential. Some of the more prominent examples include exploitative logging, fire suppression, and widespread plantings of initially faster-growing species on former longleaf sites. However, thanks to the help of a variety of federal conservation initiatives and the existence of a comparatively strong utility pole market, interest in restoring longleaf has recently increased. Unfortunately, due to a lack of local seed sources, the ability of longleaf pine to regenerate naturally may be severely inhibited in many locations. Consequently, many landowners interested in restoring longleaf may be forced to use artificial regeneration to establish a longleaf cohort.

Planting longleaf is a more technical process than planting any of the other southern pines, but with adherence to proper planting technique and the selection of quality seedlings, high survival rates can be achieved. The first consideration is whether your soil will be suitable for longleaf. Dry, sandy soils typically provide the best growing medium, while soils high in clay content should be avoided. Longleaf is shade intolerant, and so providing the soil is suitable, the second step is to create a favorable growing environment, and that includes providing adequate light. Light is typically made available by planting immediately following a clearcut, shelterwood, or group selection harvest that significantly reduces canopy density. In most situations, site preparation techniques including prescribed fire, mechanical chopping, herbicide applications, or any combination of the above. The third step is obtaining high-quality seedlings. Containerized seedlings are typically at least twice as expensive as bareroot seedlings, however, the survival rate is generally higher and height growth rate is more rapid. Nevertheless, simply purchasing containerized seedlings does not guarantee you quality growing stock. Landowners should always inspect containerized seedlings for quality prior to purchase. Indicators of high-quality seedlings include needles that are 8-12" in length, root collars at least 1/4" in diameter, and root plugs that remain firm when held horizontal.

Once high-quality containerized seedlings have been obtained, planting should occur as soon as possible. Typically, the planting season begins in October and ends in March. When possible, earlier planting dates should be selected. However, planting should never be attempted under dry soil moisture conditions. Planting depth is another important factor in establishing longleaf. While optimal planting depth will vary based on existing moisture conditions and anticipated erosion potential, the terminal bud of longleaf seedlings should always remain aboveground, regardless of site. For more detailed information on planting depth, seedling density, or planting techniques for bareroot seedlings, landowners are strongly encouraged to contact the Mississippi State University Extension Service.



Containerized longleaf seedling (Whitfield Farms & Nursery)

Longleaf site prep- Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (NRCS)



Longleaf pine planted on sandhills (srs.fs.usda.gov)

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MSU-ES Region Map

