



# Northeast Texas Forest Landowners Association Newsletter

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## Why Grow Longleaf Pines?

*Courtesy of The Longleaf Alliance*

### **Ecology:**

•**Native species:** Well-managed longleaf pine forests provide quality habitat for a variety of desirable plant and animal species. For example, bobwhite quail populations thrive in frequently burned longleaf pine stands, which typically support high legume populations. Fox squirrels, wild turkeys, whitetail deer, countless varieties of songbirds and many native butterflies flourish in longleaf pine forests as well. Reptiles and amphibians are frequent inhabitants of these forests, many found nowhere else. In addition, in both the spring and fall, wildflowers bring the forest to life with a myriad of colors.

•**Site Adaptations:** Longleaf pine can be regenerated across a wide variety of site conditions. Though typically thought of as a sandhill species, longleaf pine was once covered about 2/3 of the southeast; being found on all but the wettest soils.

•**Reduced Risk of Loss to Natural Causes:** Longleaf pine is highly resistant to pine beetles and fusiform rust, tolerant of wildfire and ice, and generally windfirm. In fact, one common agent of destruction for many southern forests, fire, is an essential tool in longleaf management. The only significant disease threatening longleaf pine, brownspot needle rust, is easily controlled by prescribed fire.

•**Biodiversity:** A longleaf pine stand maintained by fire is among the most biologically diverse ecotypes in North America. At a landscape level longleaf pine forests cover a variety of different habitat types (mountains, rolling hills, sandhills and flatwoods) and have innumerable embedded microhabitats, e.g., picture plant bogs, seepage slopes, etc.

•**Aesthetics:** For visual effect, few forests can compare with longleaf pine forests. Mature longleaf forests are frequently referred to as "park-like". Some people find young longleaf plantations attractive.

•**Carbon Sink:** Because longleaf pine is longer lived than other southern pines and has the ability to sustain growth at older ages (150 years +), it has the ability to tie up stored carbon for long periods of time. Longleaf is also better able to sustain growth at older ages (150 years +).

•**Cultural:** For those whose roots go far back into the history of the southeastern U.S., chances are that longleaf pine forests played a role in the livelihood of their ancestors. Longleaf was literally the tree that built the South. Aside from lumber that was used to build homes, businesses, ships, etc., longleaf pine forests provided fare for the dinner table, medicines, a place to graze cattle, extract resin to refine turpentine or simply as a

place to go out and listen to the "whispering of the pines". Today, many people are planting longleaf pine simply because they "remember it fondly from their childhood".

### **Dollars and cents:**

•**Products:** In today's market, the products derived from longleaf pine can be much more valuable than those of other southern pines. The very traits that made longleaf pine attractive to early lumbermen still make it attractive today. That is, longleaf pine produces straight, dense, rot resistant wood.

With the current slump in the value of pulpwood (mostly used for paper products), growing trees specifically for that market is a less attractive investment for private non-industrial landowners. Similarly, the market for timber (lumber and other solid wood products) has also declined in recent years. However, most analysts feel this slump in the "timber market" is short term in nature. In contrast, one market that has not fluctuated significantly in recent years is the utility pole market. This is significant because longleaf yields an uncommonly high percentage of poles. One recent study has shown that in a 39 year old loblolly forest, only 8% of the stand was of sufficient quality to make poles. Slash pines in the same study produced slightly more poles than loblolly at 11.5%. In this study, an amazing 72% of the longleaf pine in the study would produce utility poles. When an additional 60% of the trees in your forest are worth 50% more money as poles than they would be as sawtimber, that's a powerful financial incentive.

•**Market Flexibility:** Longleaf gives landowners great market flexibility. These forests yield a variety of products and continue to grow throughout their lives, responding to thinning even at greatly advanced ages. In fact, many landowners today generate more income selling longleaf pine straw than the wood itself! Because of the variety of products yielded and the persistent long-term growth, longleaf owners should seldom if ever be forced to sell into a poor market unless all markets are down and time demands on money are pressing.

•**Investment Security:** As an investment, longleaf provides a real measure of security. It guards against catastrophic loss better than other southern pines. The value to the owner of reducing the risk of catastrophic loss is difficult to calculate, but we are all familiar with the cost of insurance, which is essentially doing the same thing, i.e. protect against catastrophic loss. Also, the historic low volatility of the pole market is analogous to the low volatility of investments in bonds. Reduced price or value swings lower investment risk.

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**NETFLA WEB SITE:  
[www.txforest.org](http://www.txforest.org)**



**FROM THE FOREST**



What is it the talking heads on TV say — “Breaking News?” The results of the membership competition are in and Ken Stewart is the winner of the 2008 NETFLA Membership contest, beating Ben Best by one new member. His \$50 check in reimbursement of his TFA dues will be presented at the February meeting. Congratulations, Ken! The contest brought in twelve new members, and with your concurrence, we will run it again this year.

We have an exciting year coming up, with some great programs and more opportunities to build membership. We’ll be outside twice and eat free twice.

The Feb. meeting will be the only formal business meeting until November (do I hear cheers in the background?) and we have a few items that need a vote, but the balance of the meeting will be Mr. Beacom’s presentation and the question/answer period. Be as specific and detailed with questions as you like. This man is an expert and has answers. He also needs our help.

First up in May is the TFA Tailgate Rally near Mt. Enterprise. This is a food, forest practices, equipment, and much more event sponsored by your TFA Landowners Council. All the vendors and activities, including hot grilled burgers and sausage on a stick, will back at this biennial gathering. The event was moved back to May to get some warmer and more favorable weather. We have a forest service van reserved that will probably leave from Gilmer, or you’re welcome to use your own vehicle.

At the end of May, we will have the rare privilege of touring Sid Greer’s tree farm near Daingerfield. Sid and Eva were nominated for Texas Tree Farmers of the Year in 2000, and their place has done nothing but change for the better since that time. Sid has continued to experiment with forest planting and management techniques and has a lot to show us. Many of you have never had a chance to see their operation, but those who toured it in 2001 still remember it as perhaps the best field day in the history of this organization. We will also have a free catered lunch due to our victory in the 2008 TFA membership contest.

The August meeting will be at the Gilmer Civic Center. The Texas Forest Service is sponsoring one of their Sustainable Forestry workshops specifically targeting our counties and will direct mail forest landowners in these counties, as well as advertising the workshop in the local media. There will be a free lunch at this one as well, and turnout has often run to over 200 interested folks. This is a great chance to get updated on management practices and an even better opportunity to recruit and sign up new members to NETFLA. We could set up a booth/table right next to the TFS booth (these guys always have a tremendous display) and have a great day. We really need to maximize this opportunity, since it only comes every few years.

See you on Valentine’s Day!

*Bill Tucker*

## Program and Meeting Notes

Charlie Beacom, Business Origination Manager for Duke Energy Generation Services, will be our speaker at the Feb. meeting. Duke Energy (stock symbol DUK) is a large multi-state power generation company with a lot of coal and some nuclear power plants, primarily in the Southeast US, and is very interested in expanding their green footprint through biomass generation.

Back in late November, Charlie informed me that his company wants to build at least one new 50 megawatt biofuel electricity generation plant in Northeast Texas within the next three years, and would like to build more in East Texas. I shared this information with many of you via email. According to Charlie, the technology is here and the numbers will work.

These plants are environmentally friendly and have a low footprint. One plant would employ about 30 people, with minimal water usage, mainly for the steam boilers, so no aquifer drawdown or wastewater runoff problems.

The proposition is to take the tops and slash (including hardwood) that we now leave in the woods and use this material to fire boilers to produce electricity. The economically effective haul radius from the plant would be about 50 miles, so, depending on the site, all of our counties might benefit.

There are many advantages to forest landowners from utilization of what has always been waste wood, including access for better management and superior growth as well as a general upgrade to site quality and aesthetics from the public view.

All of you are encouraged to invite someone from your local economic development group to the meeting. Charlie will give a brief presentation, followed by as long as it takes to answer questions. Some development groups have already been contacted, and I have Charlie's contact information for those that may want to talk with Mr. Beacom prior to the meeting.

Bring lots of questions, and see you at the meeting — *Bill*

## 2009 PROGRAM CALENDAR

**Saturday, Feb. 14, 10:00 AM**  
**Woody Biomass Electricity Plant  
For Northeast Texas**  
**Pilgrim Community Room**  
**Pittsburg, Texas**

**Saturday, May 2, 9 AM - 2PM**  
**Forest Landowners Tailgate Rally**  
**Mt. Enterprise, Texas**

**Saturday, May 30, 9AM**  
**Greer Farm Tour, and TFA Lunch**  
**Near Daingerfield, Texas**

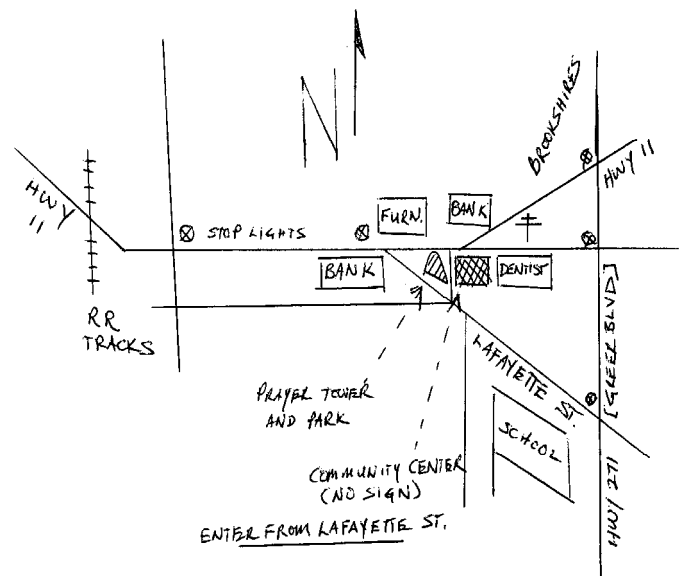
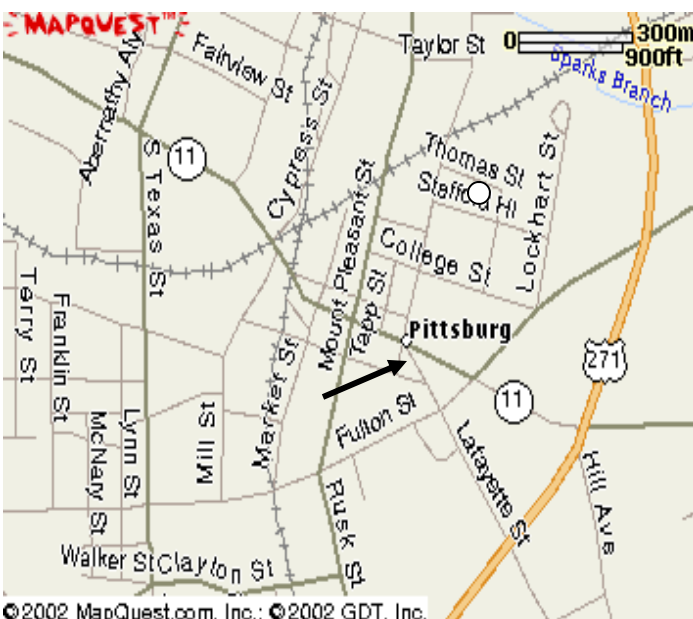
**Saturday, August 15, 9AM-2PM**  
**TFS Sustainable Forestry  
Workshop and Free Barbecue**  
**Gilmer Civic Center**

**Saturday, Nov. 14, 10 AM**  
**Elections, Program Not Set Yet**

**Please Remit 2009 Dues to:**

**NETFLA**  
**PO Box 642**  
**Mt. Vernon, TX 75457**

**Dues are \$15 per member or asso-  
ciate per year. Make checks pay-  
able to NETFLA, and thanks!**



# The Top 10 Myths of Tree Care

By the International Society of Arboriculture

*Should you prune your trees in the Spring?*

*How deep must fertilizer be applied to reach the roots of your trees?*

*Which species of trees should be topped to keep them from falling on your house?*

Most homeowners treasure the trees on their property but know little about how to care for them. Much of what you may have heard about tree care is actually incorrect, based on myths and misconceptions. Here are the top 10 myths of tree care.

**MYTH #1: When a tree is planted it should be securely staked to ensure the development of a stable root system and a strong trunk.**

Although it is sometimes necessary to stake trees to keep them upright and allow establishment, there are some adverse effects of staking. Compared to staked trees, unstaked trees tend to develop a more extensive root system and better trunk taper. Allowing a small amount of movement can help root and trunk development. Of course, the worst effect of staking is the possibility of trunk damage from the staking wires or ties. Staking materials usually should be removed after one year to avoid "girdling" the tree.

**MYTH #2: Newly planted trees should have their trunks wrapped with tree wrap to prevent sunscald and insect entry.**

Studies using most common tree wraps have shown that they do not prevent extreme fluctuations in temperature on the bark. In some cases, the temperature extremes are worse. Also, tree wraps have proven quite ineffective in preventing insect entry. In fact, some insects like to burrow under it.

**MYTH #3: Trees should be pruned back heavily when they are planted to compensate for the loss of roots.**

Tree establishment is best on unpruned trees. Although pruning the top can reduce the amount of water that evaporates from the leaves, the tree needs a full crown to produce the much-needed food and the plant hormones that induce root growth. The tree will develop a stronger, more extensive root system if it has a fuller crown. Limit pruning at the time of planting to structural training and the removal of damage branches.

**MYTH #4: When removing a branch from a tree, the final cut should be flush with the stem to optimize healing.**

First of all, trees don't "heal" in the sense that wounds on people heal. Our bodies regenerate tissues in much the same form of the tissues that were removed (to a limited extent). Trees compartmentalize wounds, generating woundwood over the wounded area. Flush cutting removes the "branch collar," creating a larger wound than if the branch were removed outside the collar. Also, it is likely that some of the parent branch tissue will be removed. The spread of decay inside the tree is greater with flush cuts.

**MYTH #5: Pruning wounds greater than three inches in diameter should be painted with a wound dressing.**

Research has shown that the common wound dressings do not inhibit decay, do not prevent insect entry and do not bring about faster wound closure. In fact, many of the commonly used dressings slow wound closure.

**MYTH #6: Certain fast-growing, weak-wooded trees such as silver maple and Siberian elm should be "topped" to make them less hazardous in the landscape.**

While topping these trees may reduce the potential hazard at first, they will likely be more dangerous in the future. Topping stimulates growth of twigs below the cuts. Growth of many, vigorous shoots leads to branches with weak attachments. Also decay spreads inside the stubs and branches that were topped. Within 2-5 years after topping, the tree will have regained its height, but will be more hazardous than before the topping. Besides, topping makes trees ugly. Alternatives to topping include thinning, cabling, or removal and replacement with a more suitable species.

**MYTH #7: If certain species of trees are pruned early in the spring, they will "bleed," stressing the tree and causing health problems.**

True, some trees such as maples and birches will "bleed" or lose sap from pruning cuts made early in the spring. This bleeding does not hurt the tree, and the loss of sap is inconsequential. With a few exceptions, most routine pruning can be done anytime of year. The worst time is just as the tree has leafed out in the spring. The best time is when the tree is dormant. To maximize flowering for the following year, prune just after bloom this year.

**MYTH #8: The root system of a tree is a mirror image of the top. Many people envision a large, branching taproot growing deep into the soil.**

Actually, taproots are very uncommon in mature trees. If taproots do develop, they usually will be forced into horizontal growth when they encounter hard subsoils beneath the surface. The entire root systems of most trees can be found within three feet of soil. The spread of the root system however, can be very extensive, often extending 2-3 times the spread of the crown.

**MYTH #9: Trees require "deep root fertilization" to reach their root system.**

In most U.S. soils, the vast majority of trees' fibrous, absorbing roots are in the top eight inches of soil. Roots grow where conditions are best for root growth, where water and oxygen are available. When we place fertilizer 12" - 18" deep in the soil, we are putting it too deep.

**MYTH #10: When a tree has lost a significant portion of its root system such as in construction damage, the crown should be cut back to compensate for root loss.**

While this is a common recommendation, research has not supported it. Following root loss, unpruned trees seem to respond better than pruned trees. Obviously, any removal of branches will reduce the capacity of the tree to produce food in the leaves. Although the tree will probably lose some branches as a result of the root damage (if the tree survives the trauma), it is best to let the tree decide which ones. Thus, pruning should be limited to hazard reduction at first. Later, after the tree has responded to the damage, further pruning would be in order. Get advice from an arborist- An arborist is a professional in the care of trees. A qualified arborist can give you sound advice and can provide the services your trees may need. Good arborists will perform only accepted practices. When choosing an arborist, look for ISA Certification, membership in professional associations, and ask for proof of insurance. Be wary of individuals who go door-to-door offering bargains for doing tree work. Don't be afraid to check references.

*The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), headquartered in Champaign, Ill., is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research around the world. As part of ISA's dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. For more information, contact a local ISA Certified Arborist or visit [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com).*

## ***Texas Forestry Association Offers Seminar on New Farm Bill***

The purpose of the 2008 Farm Bill Seminar is to provide the most up-to-date information available regarding federal assistance to landowners. Scheduled for February 13, 2009, (10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) the seminar will be held at the Lottie & Arthur Temple Civic Center in Diboll. The seminar will be of benefit to forest landowners, foresters, land managers, consultants, logging contractors, economic development personnel and other individuals who may be interested in the benefits of the 2008 Farm Bill. Cost to attend is \$30.00. Registration due by February 6.

### **Topics include**

- Overview of the New Farm Bill and what it means to forest landowners
- How the Farm Bill is administered in Texas
- What conservation programs are available to forest landowners and the levels of funding
- Biomass and energy provisions/available funding
- Forest Health and Disaster Recovery provisions
- Economic Development Provisions in the Farm Bill and how this can help East Texas
- Who landowners contact for assistance/timelines
- Keynote speaker during lunch

### ***Raspberry Crazy Ants***

*Joe Pase, Entomologist III, Texas Forest Service, Lufkin, Texas*

A new exotic invasive pest ant species was found around Houston (Harris County), Texas in 2002, and has begun to spread with human assistance. In 2008 it was noted that populations of this ant were increasing at a phenomenal rate and spreading to areas well beyond Houston. The ant has yet to be identified to species and is commonly referred to as the Raspberry crazy ant, *Paratrechina* sp. nr. *Pubens* (named for Tom Raspberry, the pest control operator who discovered them in Pasadena in 2002). Currently, little is known regarding the biology of this ant, but the Center for Urban and Structural Entomology at Texas A&M University is investigating. Raspberry crazy ants eat almost anything; they are omnivorous. This ant gained attention in 2008 when large numbers of them invaded electrical and computer systems causing equipment failure in traffic signals and at hospitals, schools, businesses, and airports. These ants do not sting, but worker ants possess an acidopore on the end of the abdomen, which can excrete chemicals for defense or attack. The economic impact to forestry is currently unknown, but these ants have the potential to damage agricultural crops, fish and wildlife, and become a significant urban problem. So far they have been found in 11 SE Texas counties: Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Walker, and Wharton. Additional information on them can be found at the following website: [http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/exotic\\_tx.cfm](http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/exotic_tx.cfm) Or to learn more, contact Joe Pase at [jpase@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:jpase@tfs.tamu.edu) or call (936) 639-8170.

# Pine Planting for Success

Dr. Eric Taylor, Tx. Ag. Extension Service, Overton, TX

Advances in reforestation technology have dramatically improved survival and productivity of newly planted pine plantations on industrial lands, but we see drastic declines in early survival rates among NIPFLs. Adverse weather, insects, diseases, injury to plants and mistakes in planting pine seedlings contribute to these declines. Of these potential disasters, the one we can most often improve upon is the way we plant seedlings...

## Transportation –

- During daylight hours, move seedlings in a covered vehicle if temperatures are over 50 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Stack bags no more than two-high when unloading.
- Protect bags from anything that might crush, puncture or chemically damage the seedlings.
- On warm days, use a refrigerated or insulated truck.
- Take only as many seedlings as can be planted in a day (or half a day if you can get delivery twice a day) to the site.

## Storage at the planting site –

- Keep seedlings in a cool, shaded site.
- Do not cover with plastic tarp during the day. Instead use a heat reflective tarp if you do not have a cool, shaded site.
- Move bags to shade as the shadows move during the day if stored under a tree.
- Repair rips and holes in bags or put seedlings in new bags.
- If trees must be left overnight, cover the bags with a tarp to prevent freezing.

## Cull seedlings with the following conditions –

- Broken, skinned or weak stems
- Fermented odor or mold on needles
- Slippery bark on root or stem
- Root collar diameter smaller than 1/8 inch
- Root system less than 5 inches long (less than 7 inches if longleaf)
- Root system longer than 12 inches or if more than 50% of fine roots must be pruned
- Containerized seedlings with dry, hard root plug
- Any with dry root system
- Presence of stem galls or swelling

## Seedling size –

- Larger seedlings have more fibrous roots that quickly produce new roots after planting, which increases their survival rate
- Planting larger seedlings may reduce rotation length by one year or more

Field pruning is not recommended because it often results in undersized root systems.

## Hand planting procedure -

- Tools to use – hoedad or dibble (blade at least 10 inches long).
- Use boot to clear debris around planting spot
- Insert dibble to maximum depth, then pull it toward you to

open the hole

- Plant one tree deep in the hole, then lift it carefully to ensure the roots are straight
- Plant each seedling at least 2 inches deeper than they were grown at the nursery
- Make a second slit three inches behind the first hole, the close the first hole by rocking the bar backwards then forwards.
- Close the second hole with your boot heel.
- One experienced planter can average 1,500 seedlings/day, dependent upon site condition
- Quality of planting is more important than quantity!

## Machine planting -

- Requires minimum debris in area to be planted
- More expensive than hand planting, but has superior performance on many sites
- Planting supervisor should make sure: (a) planting machine is operating properly; (b) seedlings are stored horizontally in the planting boxes and covered to prevent drying; (c) packing wheels are properly set to completely close trench around the seedling roots without damaging the seedling; (d) coulter blade creates at least a 10 inch furrow; (e) planters place the seedling without dragging and sweeping the roots; (f) seedlings are planted at the proper depth; and (g) planting rows are laid out on the contour to prevent erosion.

## Planting supervisor should look for -

- Tearing roots when pulled from the package or the carrying bag
- Trimming roots with thumb or knife
- Not closing bale or bag when seedling supplies are replenished
- Carrying trees in the hand while planting
- Failing to fully open a hole causing U- or J-roots
- Failing to push and pull to the proper position
- Failing to close the hole tightly
- Talking, bunching up and planting seedlings too close
- Discarding seedlings by slow planters to conceal lack of production
- Planting under living trees that will not be removed or killed
- Not planting wildlings

Upon completion of the job, timely inspections using 1/100 acre control plots are essential for measuring planting quality. Total tree count will show if spacing requirements were met. Each tree in the plot will be inspected for proper planting. Then one or more trees in each plot should be sampled for below ground problems (roots straight, vertical and to an 8 inch depth).

Insist on quality. *All of the investment in tree breeding, nursery culture, site preparation and careful handling can be lost if planting is done carelessly.*

## *Web Sites of Interest*

- New tree identification book - *Winter Key to Deciduous Woody Plants of East Texas* – by Michael S. Fountain and Lance Jones with illustrations by Bruce Lyndon Cunningham - [https://payment.sfasu.edu/C20200\\_ustores/web/product\\_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=152](https://payment.sfasu.edu/C20200_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=152)
- **Forest Taxation** -<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/tax.shtml>
- The Texas Forest Service’s **Timberland Decision Support System (TDSS)** is a web-based decision-making tool for non-industrial private forest landowners and others who are interested in timberland investment and management. The TDSS currently includes (1) a set of basic financial calculators for illustrating basic concepts for timberland investment; (2) a timberland investment calculator to calculate the returns on your investment given the cost and revenue [information](#) of your timberland investment and (3) a timberland management simulator with loblolly pine growth and yield models. – <http://tfsfrd.tamu.edu/tdss/default.htm>
- The Big News – Fall newsletter about Champion Trees of Texas - [http://texasforests.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/FRD/Urban\\_Forestry/Big\\_Tree\\_Registry/TheBigNews-Fall2008.pdf](http://texasforests.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/FRD/Urban_Forestry/Big_Tree_Registry/TheBigNews-Fall2008.pdf)
- National Woodland Owner Survey Data - *The Family Forest Owners and Who Owns America’s Forests?* (USDA, USFS) – <http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/results/>
- US Forest Service Photo Gallery - <http://www.fs.fed.us/photovideo/>
- “National Forests and National Parks – What’s the Difference and Why Does It Matter?” - <http://www.forestinfo.org/Products/eco-links/16-5NationalForestsNationalParks.pdf>
- Sponsored by the Cooperative Extension System and the USDA Forest Service, this site allows the user to access a variety of helpful information about forests – <http://www.forestryindex.net/>

## *Market Report – September/October, 2008*

Product	Statewide Ave. Price		Previous Ave. Price		Weight Difference
	Weight	Volume	Weight	Volume	
Pine-Sawlogs	\$29.95/ton	\$240.54/mbf	\$26.92/ton	\$224.63/mbf	+11%
Pine-Pulpwood	\$9.65/ton	\$25.95/cord	\$9.52/ton	\$25.63/cord	+1%
Pine-Chip’n’Saw	\$16.46/ton	\$44.44/cord	\$13.32/ton	\$49.98/cord	+24%
Mixed Hardwood-Sawlogs	\$23.63/ton	\$212.59/mbf	\$18.73/ton	\$161.05/mbf	+26%
Hardwood-Pulpwood	\$8.17/ton	\$22.95/cord	\$9.75/ton	\$27.86/cord	-16%

See *Timber Price Trends* at <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/timberpricetrends> for more detailed information. Copies can be purchased from the Texas Forest Service, Office of the Director, John B. Connally Building, 301 Tarrow, Suite 364, College Station, TX 77840-7896. It is recommended that you use the services of a professional consulting forester in managing any timber sale. Important factors affecting timber prices include the type, quality and volume of timber for sale, accessibility, distance to mills/markets, weather conditions, economy/market conditions, who is handling the sale, who is buying the timber, and contract requirements by the landowner.

\*Conversion factors between volume and weight vary from sale to sale, so the differences in volume prices above may not equal differences in weight prices.

1. Stumpage price statistics include gatewood sales. Stumpage prices for gatewood sales are estimated by subtracting cut-and-haul costs, other expenses, and profits provided by reporter.
2. Statewide data excludes U.S. Forest Service sales.
3. Price calculated from specific conversion factor reported for each sale if available; otherwise, the average conversion factors listed on page 4 of Texas Timber Price Trends (<http://texasforests.tamu.edu/timberpricetrends>) are used.