

CAN I MAKE MONEY RAISING CHRISTMAS TREES IN IDAHO?

LIBRARY

OCT 11 1968

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

V. H. Burlison
Extension Forester

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

★

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

IF YOU WANT TO START A CHRISTMAS TREE PLANTATION, this sheet will answer some of your questions. If you decide to go ahead, get more detailed information from your county extension agent or woodland forester.

*How much profit
can I expect?*

Profit depends on the number of acres, location, planting schedule, management, the market, and such unpredictable factors as weather. So profit varies between operations and between years.

A recent study showed that a 45-acre plantation paid about \$1,265 per acre in a nine-year period. This was after all expenses had been taken out. The average net return was about \$140 per year for the use of the land and for the manager's time and talents. All trees were planted the first year. If only 5 acres of new trees were planted each year, beginning profits would be considerably less.



Early planting—clean cultivation.

*How long does it take
to grow marketable trees?*

It takes from five to ten years to get marketable trees ranging from 5 to 7 feet tall, depending upon the species and the growing conditions. This isn't idle time. You would need to control weeds and prune and shear the trees during these years.

*Is there a good market
for Christmas trees?*

Demand for good quality Christmas trees has been strong. In recent years, the price for good quality 6-foot trees has ranged from \$1.75 to \$2.25 each. This is the stumpage price, for trees still on the stump before they're cut.

*How many acres should I have
to start with?*

It's usually best to start small—with less than 5 acres—until you get the feel of the business. Only large growers will find it economical to invest a lot of money in equipment for jobs such as



Inspection and attention are needed throughout the year.

S
53
E322

90

plowing, disking, and spraying. Small growers will find it better to contract out such work unless they already have the necessary equipment.

What's the best kind of tree to plant?

Douglas-fir and Scotch pine are the most common species planted, but growers also plant other pines and such true firs as grand fir, noble fir, and white fir.

Where can I get planting stock?

Seedlings are available from the University of Idaho Forest Nursery at Moscow. Extension agricultural agents, woodland foresters and work unit conservationists have price lists and order blanks. Private nurseries also sell trees. Select sturdy root-pruned seedlings or transplants. Vigorous plants develop faster after planting.

What kind of land do I need?

The best kind of land is neither fertile nor infertile. The trees should grow fast enough to recover from shearing, but not so fast that it is difficult to control their growth. However, sites can range from rather sandy soil to fertile agricultural land.

The site should be free of obstacles and level enough to allow the use of machinery. Avoid exceptionally dry areas, poorly drained areas, and frost pockets where late spring frosts occur regularly.



Shaping the tree by pruning adds value.

What do I need to do to get the land ready?

Before planting, you will need to plow and disk the land to get rid of grass and weeds which can slow or stop the growth of seedlings. Areas that have heavy sod should be summer fallowed.

What do I need to know about planting?

Planting is done when trees are dormant — from November through April. Spring planting is usually most successful. One man can plant 300 to 600 trees a day by hand. The recommended spacing is 5 feet by 5 feet—1740 trees per acre. On large areas, machine planting is most economical.

What do I need to do after planting?

After planting, it is a good practice to spray the ground with a chemical weed killer that will keep down the grass and weeds but will not harm the trees.

Application of weed killers will likely be needed every year or two for at least four years. Cultivation and mowing may be needed to supplement the use of weed killers for controlling weeds and grasses. See your county extension agent or woodland forester for recommendations on weed killers—the kind to use, when to use them, and the rates to apply.



Harvest time coming up!

PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED IN FURTHERANCE OF THE ACTS OF MAY 8 AND JUNE 30, 1914,
BY THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE, JAMES E. KRAUS,
DIRECTOR; AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATING.

JAMES E. KRAUS, Director