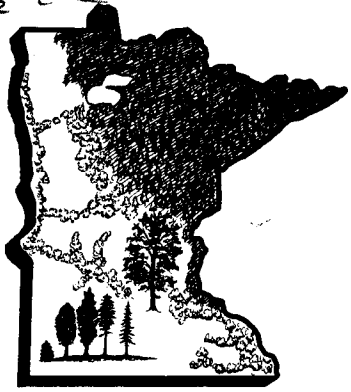


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TRENDS IN GROWING CHRISTMAS TREES IN MINNESOTA^{1/}

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To find out something about trends in Christmas tree planting and also about the production plans of growers, questionnaires were mailed to 98 members of the Minnesota Christmas Tree Producers Association early in 1958. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to non-respondents, and a total of 76 questionnaires was returned. The data presented in this study are for respondents only, and do not include any estimate for non-respondent members of the Association; neither do they provide information on non-members.

The 2487 acres of plantations reported by 61 members (some had not planted at the time of the survey and a few failed to report acreages) were concentrated in the counties north and northwest of the Twin Cities. Fifty-two percent of the acreage and 53 percent of the growers were located in Anoka, Isanti, and Sherburne Counties.

Plantations averaged 42 acres in size and 1700 trees per acre. From 1947 through 1957 red pine made up 44 percent of the trees planted and all pines 58 percent. In recent years catch pine has become more popular with growers. Norway and white spruce have also made up important percentages of the trees planted each year.

Table 1. Trees Planted by Years and Species (percent)

	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	All Years
Pine												
Scotch	12	14	12	12	8	3	0	4	8	0	0	12
Red or Norway	36	48	54	48	51	59	53	35	28	66	40	44
Jack	*	*	1	3	1	2	0	4	0	0	14	1
White	1	*	1	2	2	1	5	6	16	17	38	1
	49	62	68	65	62	65	58	49	52	83	92	58
Spruce												
Norway	18	10	1	3	3	18	42	45	47	17	8	10
White	21	21	23	26	32	12	*	2	0	0	0	23
	39	31	24	29	35	30	42	47	47	17	8	33
Miscell.	12	7	8	6	3	5	*	4	1	0	0	9
Total-Percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total-M Trees	1770	1234	747	422	246	170	65	51	26	12	13	4756

* Less than 1 percent

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The number of trees planted each year (Table 1) has increased tremendously in this 11-year period as has the number of growers planting each year (Table 2). Numbers of trees planted per grower have also increased steadily from an approximate average of 5,000 in 1947 to 25,000 in 1957. Seventeen of the 1957 planters put in 8,000 to 12,000 trees, although nine planted 32,000 or more trees.

The most important cultural practice followed was shearing. Thirty-five percent of the growers reported shearing alone, or in combination with other cultural practices such as spraying, releasing, or fertilizing. An additional 15 percent followed one or more of the practices of spraying, releasing, or fertilizing. These percentages must be interpreted in the light of the trend in plantings; obviously those growers planting for the first time in 1955 would not be shearing in 1957. When time of planting is considered, the figures are more encouraging: of the eight growers who had planted trees in the period 1947 through 1950, seven were shearing; of the 36 planting from 1947 through 1954, 53 percent were shearing.

Table 2. Growers Planting Each year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Growers</u>
1947	3
1948	3
1949	4
1950	7
1951	7
1952	11
1953	18
1954	34
1955	49
1956	59
1957	60

Seedling mortality will reduce the number of trees available for marketing. Table 3 lists average survival rates reported for a number of species by the respondents. All the trees surviving probably will not make Christmas trees. However, the number of growers selling Christmas trees at the present is so small (six growers in 1957) that an accurate estimate of the percentage of trees planted that will result in marketable Christmas trees is not possible.

Table 3. Tree Survival by Species
Percent Trees Surviving

<u>Species</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Range</u>
Pine		
Scotch	52	0-95
Red or Norway	62	0-100
Jack	72	0-90
White	40	0-70
Spruce		
Norway	61	20-80
White	61	0-100
<u>All Species</u>	<u>59</u>	

Over 90 percent of the 23,000 trees sold by respondents in 1957 were red pine. The balance of the trees sold were Scotch pine, white spruce, black spruce, and balsam. Fifty-six percent of the trees were sold to wholesalers, 31 percent to retailers, and 13 percent to consumers. Prices on the stump ranged from \$1.00 to \$1.25; insufficient data prevents estimates of price differences by species.

Table 4. Tree Sales--Realized and Expected

<u>Year</u>	<u>Trees Sold or Expected to be Sold</u>
1956	1,884
1957	23,151
1958	20,700
1959	37,900
1960	128,600

If the grower's expectations shown in Table 4 are realized, Minnesota consumers should have an excellent selection from which to pick their Christmas trees in the next few years.