

For centuries, families let nature provide for regrowth of trees and plants following a harvest. This method, called *natural regeneration*, resulted in occasional success. *Reforestation* is the process of rebuilding a forest after harvest, or after a fire or disease kills the timber. The ground is cleared of debris before seedlings are planted, seeds are sown or seed trees drop seeds. Growth of brush and grasses that compete with seedlings for water and light are limited. This method provides for a healthy, productive forest that is a sound investment for the landowner.



Choosing the old method of regeneration is a costly one in today's market.

- Successive harvests take smaller and smaller diameters, leaving less growing stock..

Abandoned cropland once resulted in acres of old field pines. This practice has largely stopped and is no longer a source of young stands.

Years of fire exclusion have allowed an understory of hardwood and brush that prevent new pine growth.

The net result is conversion of good pine sites into acres of low-grade hardwoods. Without potentially merchantable trees, the forest landowner is losing money.

- An acre of land half-stocked is half-used. Overhead costs per unit produced will double.

Scattered open-grown trees are usually multi-limbed, of poor form and of low-density wood.

Understocked stands are more expensive to log.

Landowner returns are frequently lowered. Sawtimber trees are often cut into pulpwood because they are too few and too scattered to allow a sawlog operation.

Choosing reforestation is one of the most important decisions of timber management. The cost of not reforesting results in three things:

You may lose future income. Taxes will drain your pocketbook. The property is less valuable if you want to sell. You lose the opportunity of new and expanding markets for wood. Your heirs may be in worse shape, for lost years cannot be recovered.

Forest industry loses. The cost of obtaining raw material increases when a large area must be covered. Opportunities for expansion to serve growing markets are limited.

Society loses through fewer jobs, lower tax base, less community stability, higher prices and dependence on high-cost imports.

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**This information is provided by the Alabama Forestry Commission**

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