



Fourth Generation Tyler County Tree Farmer Jack Clark (right) Shares Tree Management Practices

Tyler County Forest Landowner Association Tree Farm Tour

Jack Clark is a fourth-generation Tyler County tree farmer and Vice President of the Tyler County Forest Landowner Association. On Saturday, January 10, the association's board met in Jack's home four miles east of Woodville.

Upon conclusion of business, attendees walked outside to discover that temperatures had dropped over ten degrees. Hardy individuals donned jackets, put their hands in their pockets for warmth, and joined Jack on a tour of his fifty-six acre tree farm. The farm was originally part of the 295 acre tract Jack's great-grandfather William Clark acquired in the mid-1850's. Jack inherited his portion of the original tract in 1931, when he was only six years old.

Today, Jack manages the farm with an active tree management plan prepared in collaboration with the Texas Forest Service. In 1988, Jack planted seventeen acres in

loblolly pine seedlings that are now seventy feet tall. The stand of pines was thinned about seven years ago by harvesting every fifth row for pulp wood.

In 1997, Jack harvested most of the trees on a twenty-five acre section of his farm. After piling the debris in rows and burning it, he replanted the twenty-five acres with the most advanced loblolly pine seedlings available at that time. Planted in 1998, these pines trees are already forty feet tall.

To keep the yaupon under control, Jack bush hogs the lanes created by the thinning process and applies Garlon-4 herbicide to the yaupon foliage growing among trees. Jack, who has a private pesticide application license, mixes one ounce of Garlon-4 to a gallon of water. He adds a half ounce of surfactant or dish detergent to each gallon to enhance its adherence. It should be noted that the herbicide can damage or even kill young pine trees, so care should be taken when spraying a forested area. Observing that the yaupon is less prevalent where he burned the debris piles after harvesting the twenty-five acres in 1997, Jack wishes he had burned the debris prior to pushing it into piles.

Jack is particularly annoyed by Texas leafcutting ants, also known as town ants, on his tree farm. Young pine seedlings may be destroyed within a few days if planted in a town ant infested area. To manage the town ant colonies, Jack sprinkles a mixture of acephate insecticide and corn meal over the ant mound entrances. The mixture is one part insecticide to four parts corn meal.

Jack retains portions of the fifty-six acres in native trees, including several impressive white oaks. Oaks downed by Hurricane Rita were cut into paneling by a portable sawmill and now grace the walls of his daughter's living room. Jack maintains deer stands for fifth and sixth generation Tyler County family members to hunt.

Several of the participants journeyed to Z's Fillin Station in Woodville for further discussion and networking over lunch.