



# Forest Facts

## REFORESTATION

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Reforestation is an important component of the cycle of growing, harvesting, and regenerating our forests. State law also requires it.

Landowners may harvest trees as a routine part of their management. They may also choose to salvage trees that have been damaged from wildfire, wind, insects, disease, or other factors.

The Oregon Forest Practice Act requires landowners to reforest after logging if tree stocking levels are below the standards set in the rules. These requirements apply after any type of harvest.

### **Some history**

Oregon has long been a leader in the field of reforestation. In 1941, Oregon was the first state to require regeneration on all state and private forestland. This involved leaving two seed trees per acre to provide for natural regeneration.

In 1971, the Oregon Forest Practices Act was enacted, requiring even more aggressive reforestation following timber harvests. The Act created new rules and guidelines to help ensure successful reforestation of forestlands.

Standards for reforestation increased again in 1991, requiring more seedlings, and shorter time frames for planting.

### **Forest Practice Rules and Regulations**

Reforestation is an essential factor in assuring a continuous supply of timber and sustainable management of forest resources. Reforestation is important because it preserves soil productivity, creates wildlife habitat, enhances stream protection, protects water quality and creates recreational opportunities.

The current reforestation rules, updated and implemented in 1995, require that seedlings be planted within two years after logging, and be "free to grow" within six years after harvest. The Oregon Department of Forestry administers the Oregon Forest Practices Act and the reforestation rules. These rules describe areas that need reforestation, acceptable stocking levels (number of trees per acre), time constraints, and exceptions.

The rules allow landowners to reforest lands by planting or by natural reforestation. Seeding is also allowed, but is rarely used. Where reforestation is

required, landowners must re-plant the harvest units within two years of timber harvest. With Department approval, the timelines may vary for natural reforestation to match local conditions. Reforestation is required when the tree stocking levels are below the standards following logging, regardless of what the stand was like before harvesting or why the landowner chose to harvest.

### **Reforestation in Oregon**

Oregon is one of the nation's leaders in reforestation. Millions of new seedlings are planted on forestland each year, and reforestation plans are often made prior to harvesting activities.

The tree planting season extends from the onset of wet weather in the late fall, through winter months, and into the spring. Seedlings planted during this period can take advantage of the cool, wet weather conditions that promote good root development. Establishing the root system helps the seedlings withstand the stress of both summer heat and drought.

Generally, landowners in western Oregon rely more on planting, while eastern Oregon landowners rely more on natural regeneration. Landowners in Oregon plant a variety of tree species, including Douglas-fir, western hemlock and western red cedar in western Oregon, and ponderosa pine in eastern Oregon.

The Department's stewardship foresters support landowners in their reforestation efforts by providing technical advice and knowledge on ways to reforest their land and comply with forest practice requirements.

Annual reforestation compliance examinations are a central element of the Department of Forestry's forest practice monitoring program.

Landowners not meeting reforestation requirements are subject to citations, civil penalties, and orders to reforest their land.