

THE MOUNTAIN NEWS

At the head of Big Cottonwood in the Wasatch Mountains not far from Salt Lake City, Uncle Sam has one of the most important of the nine planting stations which have been established in the National Forests throughout the country.

Of all the planting stations that are maintained by the Forest Service this one, perhaps, is the most ideal and it promises to become one of the best producers. It is estimated that under the present capacity, 1,000,000 seedlings can be grown annually and if it becomes necessary the nursery can be increased to two or three times its present size. The planting operations are in charge of N. J. Fetherolf, planting assistant, working under the direction of E. H. Clarke, Supervisor of the Salt Lake and Wasatch National Forests.

This station is intended for the production of forest tree seedlings for planting on important watersheds in the Wasatch Mountain. This nursery has a one-half acre in seed-beds and a good-sized area is available for use in transplanting the seedlings after they have grown in the seed-beds one or two years.

Forest planting is becoming more and more important each year and the public generally realizes that if the supply of commercial timber is to be maintained a great deal of planting must be done in the future. The Government has encouraged private land owners throughout the Middle West to plant trees upon their homesteads, and within the last five or six years advice in forest planting has been given to thousands of farmers in the Middle West.

There are now over 150 million acres in National Forests and within these are included vast areas of land that require forest planting because seed trees are wholly lacking. Among the various policies connected with the management of the National Forests that of forest planting is yet in its infancy, but within a comparatively short time it will assume greater importance in the general management of the National Forests.

It requires from two to four years to produce a stock sufficiently large for planting and therefore the process of reforestation at the beginning must be slow. Any planting that is done in the vicinity of this station will serve two purposes; first, improvement of the watershed cover of an important drainage basin, from which Salt Lake City is supplied, and, at the same time, the production of commercial timber on land that formerly bore an excellent stand but which has been devastated by careless lumbering and forest fires.

It will be one or two years before any stock is available for planting, but then there should be at least 300,000 trees ready to set out on the mountain side. There is no question about the success of field planting since the region is potentially a forest area. There is abundant opportunity for experimental work in testing new species and this spring seed of a large number of trees that are not common to the Wasatch Mountains have been sown at the nursery to determine their adaptability to that region.

Seed of Japanese larch, which is very similar to the European larch, has been sown at this station and while it is not certain just what the results will be, yet it is believed that this may prove to be a valuable tree for planting certain sites. It is estimated that there are over 10,000 acres within range of this station which are in very urgent need of reforestation. In 25 years the barren slopes will be green again with trees and the planted forests will be improving the water flow which is of great worth to Salt Lake City.