



THE OVERSTORY

MSU Forestry Extension Newsletter



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Banking on Seeds and Sprouts for Natural Regeneration

The Bradford Pear Tree: Beauty or Beast?

Timber Market Report for 2nd Quarter, 2018

Delta Hardwoods: Sweetgum Isn't So Bad

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Banking on Seeds and Sprouts for Natural Regeneration

John Willis, Extension Specialist

Few promotional opportunities attract forest landowners more than a seedling give away. While the lure of free seedlings is understandable, it is also somewhat perplexing, as some landowners forget that free seedlings can be obtained at almost any time through natural regeneration. Regenerating naturally, however, is more complicated than planting, as a variety of factors can affect which species successfully establish. Understanding these factors is critically important for obtaining desirable regeneration, as tree species have differing values depending on management objectives.

One factor underappreciated by many is the influence of the soil seed bank. Seeds of certain tree species can survive in the seedbank for years, and in some situations decades, after dispersal. This attribute allows species with seedbank longevity to capitalize on regeneration opportunities even during poor seed years. Yellow poplar is perhaps the best example of this strategy, as its seeds can remain viable in the seedbank for up to 8 years. Although seed dispersal also contributes to the regeneration response, it is this seedbank persistence that facilitates the strong regeneration response of yellow poplar following harvesting. Other species of trees and shrubs with seedbank longevity which could be expected to establish a flush of germination following harvest, include: green ash, sugar berry, sweetgum, red maple, muscadine grape and American beautyberry. Species that rarely germinate from the seedbank beyond the first year include: pines, oaks, hickories, flowering dogwood, boxelder, and yaupon. For these species, new seedlings have to be obtained from other sources.

Another factor to consider in natural regeneration is the influence of sprouting. Sprouts typically grow faster than seed established seedlings as a result of their more mature root system. This is why sprouts often occupy the best growing positions following harvest. Oftentimes, a tree will send up multiple sprouts, leading to concern over tree form. While not ideal, this situation typically resolves itself, as the tree will only supply resources to one or two dominant sprouts. Species that can reliably be counted on to sprout as mature trees include: oak, hickory, sweetgum, blackgum, boxelder, red maple, yellow poplar, sugar berry. Pine species will not sprout as adults following harvest. Landowners should also be cognizant of the fact that sprouting potential typically declines after 50 years.

THE OVERSTORY

The Bradford Pear Tree: Beauty or Beast?

Jason Gordon, Extension Specialist

Every spring there is talk in the news media, blogs, and between neighbors about the “curse of the Bradford pear” (*Pyrus calleryana*). These discussions capitalize on the Bradford pear’s spring blooms – those magnificent spade-shaped crowns with profuse white blossoms we see in yards and along city streets. Depending on the region of Mississippi, flowering occurs in early to mid-March.

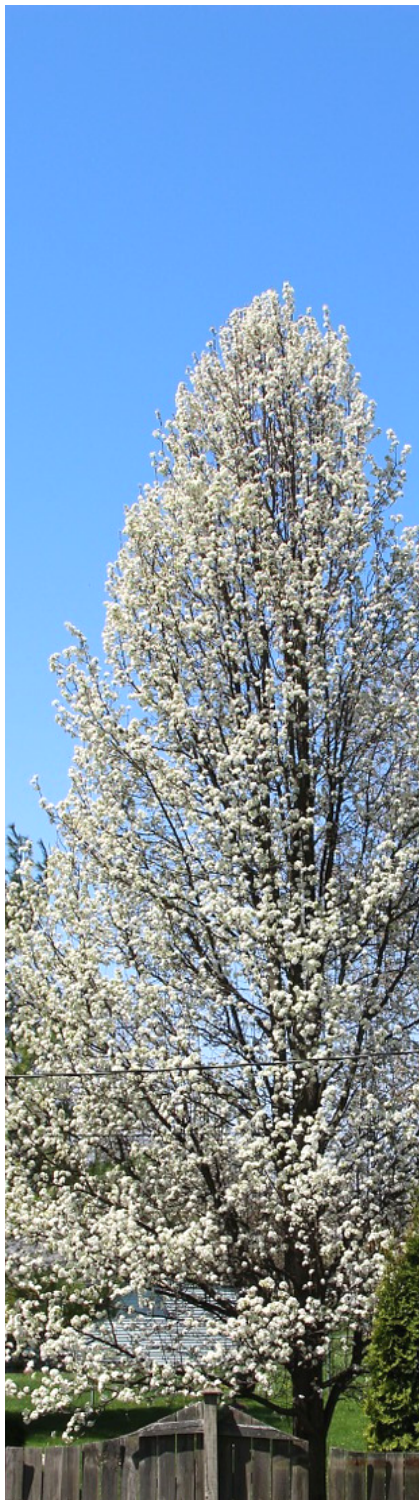
Commentators on the curse of the Bradford pear point out that the tree is a non-native species brought from East Asia (principally Southern China and Vietnam) during the 1960s. The species matures rapidly for a tree, typically not living for more than 25 years.

Although the blossoms are attractive to many, they can have a fairly noxious odor resembling rotting flesh. The smell has evolved over millennium to attract insects attracted to the blossoms for pollination.

The main problem with Bradford pear is it has very weak branch connections to the stem of the tree. The tree has a tendency to fork into multiple stems, known as co-dominant stems. These are stems of equal diameter resulting in a weak structure. Co-dominant stems have included bark where the branches do not adequately fuse to the main stem. Consequently, when there is ice or wind, the tree twists (known as torsion), which separates those weakly fused branches from the stems. That’s why we often see Bradford pears with broken limbs.

Bradford pear should not be planted, but it should only be removed once it is a significant risk to health or property. Some commentators claim pear cultivars work somewhat better; however, the cultivars still tend to have branch unions that separate rather easily during wind and ice storms.

Perhaps the best solution to the problems caused by Bradford pear is to select a different species. Native trees should be considered which have evolved in Mississippi’s climate and soils. There are a number of native ornamentals that have similar showy blossoms, shape, and size which make Bradford pear appealing. Some of these include buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) for the white blossoms, various magnolias (*Magnolia* spp.), and various dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.) for the northern part of state.



Bradford Pear in bloom
photo: Pixabay.com



Bradford Pear blossoms, photo: Pixabay.com



Southern Magnolia Blossom, photo: Pixabay.com

Mississippi Timber Price Report

2nd Quarter, 2018

The Mississippi Timber Price Report (MTPR) is a quarterly survey of stumpage timber prices in Mississippi. It is developed to provide a picture of timber market activity. The state average prices for common forest products are listed. Values given are offered as a guide to help individuals assess the fair market value of their timber. The average price should not be applied as the exact value for a particular tract. This report is updated quarterly and is available at www.extension.msstate.edu or by contacting your local county Extension office.

Quarter's Prices: 2nd Quarter 2018 Stumpage Prices/Ton (Source: MSU Extension)

NOTE: Prices vary widely across the state; average prices presented here may not reflect your local market.

Pine Sawtimber - \$22.62	Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber - \$34.27
Pine Chip N Saw - \$13.28	Hardwood Pulpwood - \$7.66
Pine Pulpwood - \$5.79	Oak Sawtimber - \$50.67
Pine Poles - \$41.33	Crossties - \$32.43

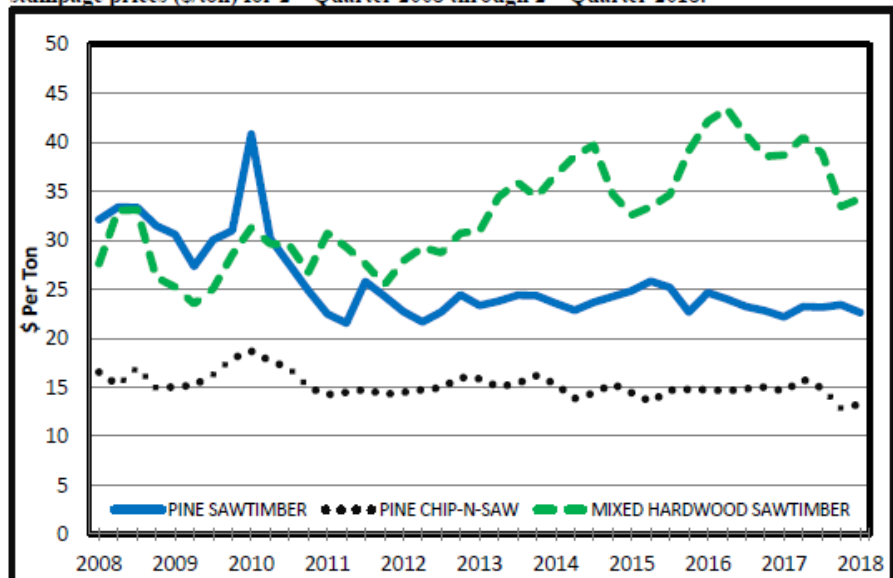
What's Moving Prices - Trends:

The oversupply issue continues to influence timber prices in Mississippi. Compared to the 1st quarter 2018, statewide average prices for pine poles and pine sawtimber decreased while pine plylogs, chip-n-saw, and pulpwood prices increased. Oak sawtimber, mixed hardwood sawtimber, and crossties increased in value statewide compared to 1st quarter 2018 while hardwood pulpwood decreased. However, regional differences were noticed for each species/product class with some regions seeing increased prices while other regions decreased.

Prices are expected to remain relatively stable, with slight increases for some species/product classes and slight decreases for others. Prices in north Mississippi, particularly pulpwood will continue to suffer because of oversupply and reduced demand in the area.

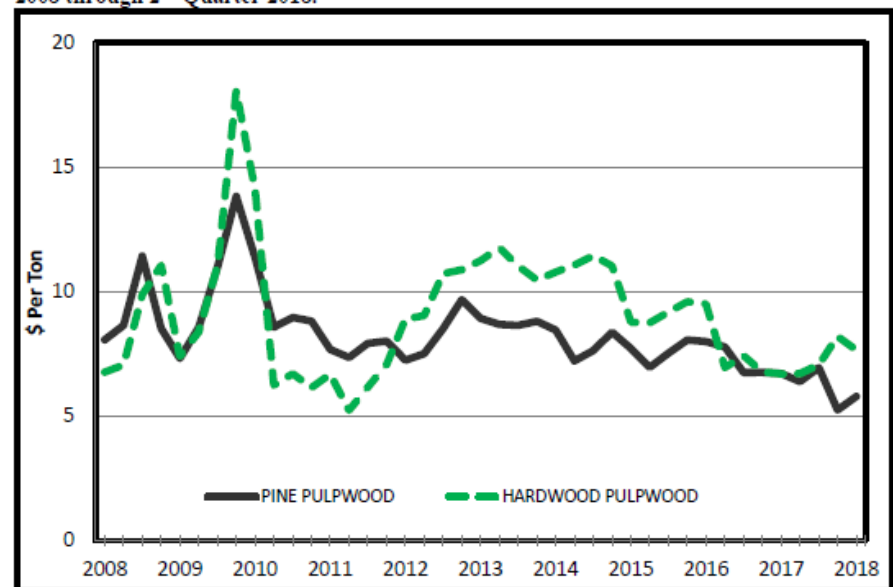
Timber-Mart South (TMS), Inc. has more detailed data available by subscription that contains values for other timber products not included in this report. TMS is compiled and produced at the Center for forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank W. Norris Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See <http://WWW.TMARTSOUTH.COM/> for information on subscriptions.

Average Mississippi pine sawtimber, pine chip-n-saw, and mixed hardwood sawtimber stumpage prices (\$/ton) for 2nd Quarter 2008 through 2nd Quarter 2018.*



*Prices from 2008-2017 are from Timber Mart-South. 2018 prices are from Mississippi State University Extension.

Average Mississippi pine and hardwood pulpwood stumpage prices (\$/ton) for 2nd Quarter 2008 through 2nd Quarter 2018.*



*Prices from 2008-2017 are from Timber Mart-South. 2018 prices are from Mississippi State University Extension.



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Delta Hardwood Notes: Sweetgum Isn't So Bad

Brady Self, NWMS Extension Forestry Specialist

Most people are familiar with sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), however, many are not aware of the range of ecologic and economic benefits inherent to the species. Foresters schooled in pine silviculture look to sweetgum as a weed species in need of eradication in the name of pine health. Landowners see little benefit in the species when encountering the fast growing invader that drops huge quantities of those familiar spiked balls on lawns, pathways, flower gardens, driveways, etc. However, sweetgum does play a highly beneficial role in hardwood ecosystems.

Sweetgum is commonly found in bottoms across the South and is well-known for colonizing old fields, cutovers, and other open areas. The species can be found ranging from Connecticut southwards to central Florida and west into southern Illinois and eastern Oklahoma and Texas. It is one of the most site tolerant species, growing on both dry and wet sites. Sweetgum is also one of the fastest growing hardwood species in the southern U.S. and stump-sprouts prolifically.

One of the most misunderstood aspects of sweetgum is its economic viability. Wood from the species can be used for pulp, low-grade sawtimber, higher grade lumber, and veneer in plywood manufacturing. From an ecological standpoint, the species serves in an important role in stem quality improvement of shade intolerant species like oaks. It serves as a "trainer" to help promote upward growth of oak stems and early self-pruning of defect causing branches. Also, the species provides necessary vertical structure for many species of birds and highly nutritious seeds (as high as 28% crude protein) which are readily consumed by birds, squirrels, chipmunks and other rodents.



Sweetgum fruit, Photo: Pixabay.com

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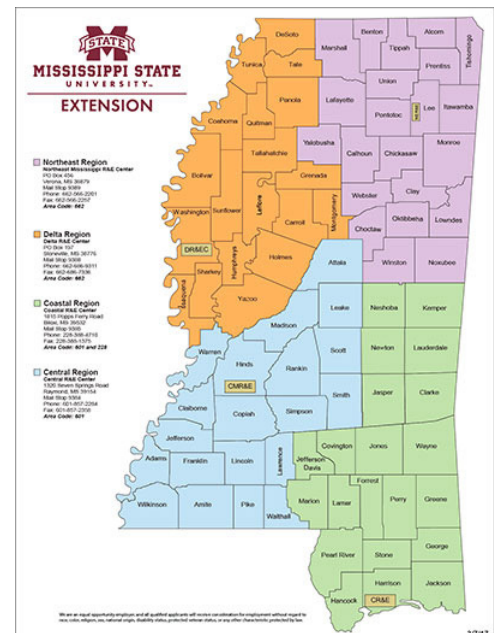
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MSU-ES Region Map



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