

RANDOM REFLECTIONS ABOUT TREES

By Bob Kintigh

2005 Oregon Tree Farmer of the Year

2006 Western Regional Tree Farmer of the Year

2006 National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year

"Only God can make a tree" the poet Joyce Kilmer said many years ago. Working in a tree nursery is really like watching God make millions of little trees. It is amazing how the little seed when given the right conditions bursts forth with energy and vigor and develops into a small tree that has the potential of becoming similar to the giant tree from which the seed was collected. What are these conditions? We put the seeds through a chill period to replicate the winter in a natural situation and then place them in a warm moist and sunny environment. This awakens them from their dormancy. As I thought about it, I wondered if I could do more to help people who are living in a spiritual winter environment. Maybe with the light and warmth of my encouragement, they could become happy and productive people.

Light serves other important purposes throughout the life of a tree. Sunlight provides the energy for the tree to produce cellulose which is the building material for the tree structure. The length of the day regulates when many trees begin growing in the spring and when they stop growing in the fall. Just like trees, in order for us to live a fruitful and productive life it is necessary that we have a source of light and energy.

Long ago I found a source of light and energy for my life. I found this light in Jesus, my Savior. The Bible tells us in John 9: 12 that Jesus said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, and will have the light of life."

Wood has served man in many ways since the beginning of time. We all immediately think of wood being used for houses and furniture but there are literally thousands of different uses of wood and its derivatives. Wood requires less energy to produce a usable product than is required for other materials. Hundreds of species of trees with different characteristics give us many choices. Tree farmers can feel good about producing a commodity that provides humans so many benefits.

Trees are almost universally considered a symbol of what is strong, noble, beautiful, and vigorous. Perhaps this is why people dislike seeing trees being cut. The first Psalm likens a righteous man to a tree planted by a stream.

Here are some things an unknown author said we can learn about trees:

- > It is important to have roots
- > In today's complex world it pays to branch out.
- > If you really believe in something don't be afraid to go out on a limb.
- > Sometimes you have to shed your old bark in order to grow.
- > Avoid people who would like to cut you down.

My favorite on the list was "as you approach the autumn of life you can't hide your true colors". But don't worry. Rejoice! There are greater times ahead in the next world. And I believe it is a possibility that those who have put their trust in Jesus and love to grow trees will have their own woodlands forever in heaven. For those who have other interests, living out your passion is fulfilling in this life and in the life to come. After all Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in the future.