

REPORT OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE II  
FOREST TREE SEED CERTIFICATION

Forest tree seed certification has received attention from foresters in Europe and in this country for a good many years. The need for and the problems associated with certification have been described in our literature by H. L. Shirley, H. I. Baldwin, E. W. Littlefield, and Paul O. Rudolf, among others, so at this conference, it may be assumed that the importance of knowing the origin and quality of tree seed is clearly appreciated.

Inter-Sectional Committee on Seed Certification S.A.F.

Dr. H. I. Baldwin presented a paper on Seed Origin and Reforestation at the annual meeting of the New York Section of the Society of American Foresters on January 31, 1935. Following this meeting, a joint committee of the New England, New York, and Alleghany Sections of the Society was set up to provide more active consideration of seed source in the Northeast. The committee consisted of H. I. Baldwin and Charles R. Meek, with E. W. Littlefield as chairman.

In the March, 1937, issue of S.A.F. Affairs, this committee presented its observations. These are reported here because they emphasize that the problems found to be important today have been recognized for many years.

The committee report stated that the use of forest seed of unknown source or of uncertain quality by professional foresters constitutes malpractice of a kind that would not be tolerated within other professional groups.

The committee also observed that the collection and sale of forest tree seed is primarily controlled by seed dealers or local collectors, working for profit, who can hardly be expected to take greater interest in the quality of the goods than is demanded of them by the consumer. Unless this consumer demand is expressed forcibly, and by a large group, quality will continue to vary within unpredictable limits.

The problems of maintaining continuity of record for tree seed as it passes through successive handlings are enormous and well recognized. In several European countries, however, these have been overcome to a large extent by concerted, cooperative action of foresters, nurserymen, and seed dealers, backed by a certain amount of governmental regulation. Of even greater importance has been the creation of a centralized association or seed institution which furnishes opportunity for collectors and dealers to have their seed tested and certified.

The minimum requirements in the use of forest seed, according to the committee's report, should include:

1. Use of local seed. wherever desirable strains are known to exist.
2. Control of local collection by the forestry organization or organizations which will eventually use the seed.
3. Insistence by foresters on definite proof of origin by the seed dealer.
4. Consistent attempts, in the case of imported seed to secure seed having a provenance compatible with conditions where the stock is to be planted, particularly as regards elevation, rainfall, and June-September temperature.







