



North Carolina
Forest Service

FORESTRY

Leaflets

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Maintaining & Managing Your Loblolly Pine Plantation

Now that you have invested the time and funding to establish your new loblolly pine plantation, the responsibility to manage these seedlings has just begun. The recommendations on this leaflet may be used as a basic template or starting point for the long term maintenance of your forest plantation. The suggested timelines will vary according to the site conditions and your overall objectives. You are encouraged to document and keep records of all management activities that are done on your forestland. Consult with a forester or the N.C. Forest Service for advice on how to tend to your trees.

Management Activity

Suggested Timeline

Inspect and maintain property boundary lines.
Maintain firebreaks, access trails and roads.

Annually or more frequently,
as needed.

Inspect for signs of disease, damage from animals, or insect infestation. If livestock grazing is desired within the plantation, wait until the trees reach an average height of about 30 feet.

Annually, in spring and summer
when disease/insect activity
usually increases.

Check for competing vegetation or presence of invasive plant species. Assess whether or not your pine seedlings are being suppressed by surrounding trees, shrubs, vines or grass. Take action to eliminate the competition and 'release' your seedlings if needed to enhance growth.

Annually, in summer.
Continue checking until age 10 to
12, or when the pine treetops start
to close-in together.

Assess the degree of fire hazard within the plantation and have a prescribed burn conducted as needed to reduce the hazard of wildfire.

Starting at age 15 to 20, then as
needed on 3-to-5 year intervals.

Thin the plantation to remove suppressed, diseased, poorly-formed, or damaged trees. Thinning will open up more growing space for the best quality trees that are retained. Obtain professional forestry advice to assess the need for a thinning and before timber harvest begins.

Sometime between age 15 and 25.
Future thinnings may be
appropriate, depending on site
factors.

Harvest the plantation timber and begin plans for site prep and reforestation. Obtain professional forestry advice to help plan the timber harvest and develop a reforestation plan.

Sometime between age 35 to 50,
depending on growth, timber
markets, site productivity and your
goals. Loblolly pine generally begins
to decline and succumb to natural
mortality after 50+ years and can
lose significant economic value.



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