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## ABOUT TREE PLANTING

Interesting Article by C. B. Waldron of the Agricultural College.

The average prairie settler after becoming established naturally thinks of protecting his home by a shelter of trees. Later on as the shelter grows there is a desire to plant fruit trees and flowering plants. It is safe to say that there is scarcely a

farm in the state that is properly supplied with trees of all kinds, while most of them are but poorly supplied. The reason for this is the urgent need for doing other things and the lack of knowledge in the planting and care of trees.

It is natural that the first trees planted should be a quick, sure growth. For this purpose cottonwoods have ordinarily been used. The difficulty with these is that the growth is more quick than sure. In localities in which there is an abundant supply of moisture that the trees can draw upon, after the first few years the cottonwood is a valuable tree. Wherever the supply of

moisture is deficient the cottonwood begins dying after twelve or fifteen years. Soils having a stratum of sand at a depth of twelve or fifteen feet that is filled with water invariably grow good cottonwoods. What is known as white cottonwood produces timber which is of little economic value aside from fuel. The yellow cottonwood, on the other hand, is distinguished by timber of a very different sort. It takes a good finish and has about as much value for many purposes as basswood.

In most localities white willow will be far more satisfactory than the cottonwood. The most valuable groves in the state at the present time are undoubtedly of this variety. They can be grown much thicker upon the ground than the cottonwood, and on the average soil will grow nearly as rapidly. They do not begin dying out at an early age as does the cottonwood. The timber is well suited for fuel and makes very good posts, especially when treated with creosote. The white willow is one of the few deciduous trees which succeeds well in a pure plantation, that is, without the mixture of other varieties. For general purposes it should be planted about four feet apart each way. It is always started from cuttings. If the ground is in good condition these may be planted at once in place or they may be planted in the garden for a year while the ground is being put into shape.

The other most valuable tree for general planting in North Dakota is the ash. It is of a very different type than the white willow in that its wood is more valuable and does not mature at so early a period. As a permanent grove we have no tree to equal it. When neglected it is rather slow in growth, but with good care in the eastern parts of the state its growth is rather rapid, being one and one-half to two feet per year. Ash trees grown from seed at the Experiment Station are now thirty-five feet in height, though only seventeen years old. The ash tree makes but poor shade while young, and for this reason the box-elder is often planted alternately with the ash. The rows in this case are eight feet apart with the ash and box-elder alternating. The box-elders are removed at the end of about four years leaving the ash four by eight feet apart. Later on these will require additional thinning.

We have about discarded the elm for all purposes except street planting. It is difficult to start in a grove and is inferior for all purposes to the ash. If grown in a nursery until it attains a height of ten to twelve it then makes our one best shade tree.

The soft maple is a valuable tree in some places but it is not so generally reliable as the white willow. We find it an excellent tree for wind-breaks in the southeastern part of the state but do not recommend its general cultivation outside of that.

There are a number of other trees that one can plant to a greater or less extent, but these should not be depended on for general planting. Among these are the Hackberry, Butternut and Walnut. The first is much like the elm but is somewhat more valuable for general planting. It does not make so good a shade tree. The Black walnut seems to be doing well among the other trees. We gathered several bushels of nuts last year grown close to Fargo. There are also bearing trees as far north as Grand Forks.

For all the trees except the white willow we plant seedling trees, usually from one and one-half to two feet in height. These are quickly planted in a trench made with a plow and are more apt to grow than older trees. We have always recommended pretty constant cultivation but find that in the western part of the state mulching with old straw seems to be preferable. This also seems to be true more or less in the eastern part of the state.

The failure with trees often arises from the fact that too few are planted. The timber belt should be of generous proportions no less than eight rods in width. The right sorts of trees so planted and properly tended will yield larger returns than any equal area on the farm.

C. B. WALDRON.