

CASTOR PLOTS

This series of three quarter-acre plots on an old field by Castor Creek is an experiment in thinning loblolly pine about twenty years of age. The trees on these plots, where the soil was very favorable to the growth of the pine, were large enough to yield a considerable amount of material ^{of a size} which is quite frequently marketable in the South today, including a number of tram ties and a considerable amount of cordwood. Where a market for this sort of material exists at all, thinnings can quite often be made to pay their way, or even to yield a small profit. From the stand-point of benefiting the remaining stand, however, it is not desirable to wait until the trees are as old as this before thinning them. Particularly on an old field, where the cultivation and the more fertile soil ^{cause} extremely rapid ^{height} ~~xxx~~ growth, the crowns of the trees are reduced to very small proportions at an early age. Not only are the crowns narrow, on account of the large number of trees to the acre, but they are also extremely short because the rapid rise in the general level of the crowns shades out the lower limbs before they have much time to function as food producers. One of the objects of thinning the Castor plots was to bring out the comparatively slow response ^{which may be expected} to thinning in stands of this age.