

# Small Woodlot Improvement Guide

## New Jersey Forest Facts

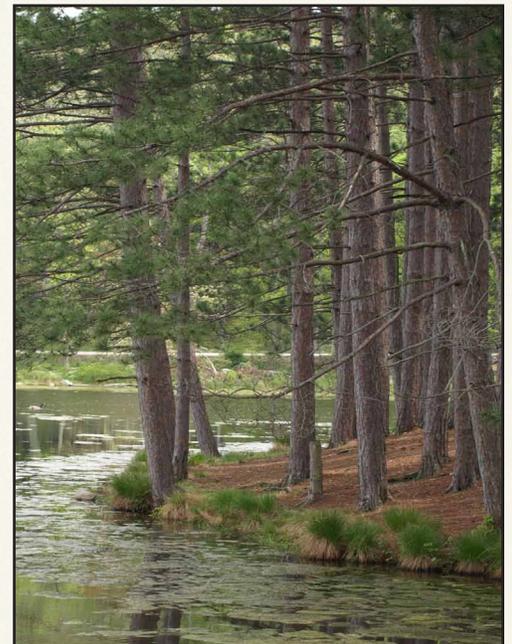
- 45% of New Jersey or 2.1 million acres is covered by forests.
- 62% of New Jersey's forestland is privately owned.
- 68% of private forest landowners hold less than 10 acres

*Because the majority of the forestland is privately owned, the future of New Jersey forests is in your hands.*

A small woodlot is typically around 10 to 30 acres of forestland. If you own at least 10 acres with trees growing on it, then you may own a forest! No matter how large or small, you can typically follow forest management practices to make your woodlot more healthy, attractive and profitable. Even unused pasture and open land can be suitable for growing trees.

By improving your woodlot you can:

- Improve wildlife habitat.
- Improve aesthetic, recreation and open space values.
- Initiate forest stand regeneration.
- Improve forest health by reducing the potential of damage from pests and moisture stresses.
- Restore natural plant communities.
- Reduce wildfire hazard.
- Increase carbon storage in selected trees.
- Provide an added source of income.
- Provide energy for farm or home use.





## Maintenance Requirements

Some stand maintenance is required to ensure a healthy forest stand. A series of progressive improvements may be needed over the life of the tree stand to maintain healthy tree growth. Ongoing forest maintenance practices to prevent forest degradation should include invasive species management, deer management, insect pest management, and wildfire prevention.

## Management Objectives

Forest management is driven by the landowner's objectives, which can include establishing habitat for wildlife, developing aesthetic or recreation value, or deriving income from timber sales. Depending on the landowner's objectives different "value" trees will be desired. The choices that a landowner makes are often based on the current stand condition. Consider the following tree characteristics that help support the different objectives.



### For Wildlife Value

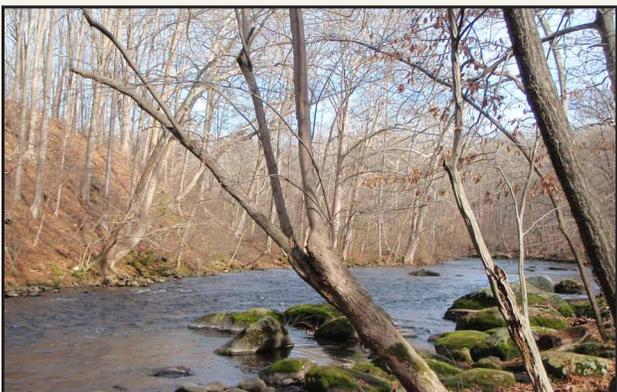
- Large healthy crown in full sun
- Fruit or nut tree
- Cavity tree with longevity of over 10 years

### For Timber Value

- Large healthy crown in full sun
- No forks or large branches
- High value commercial species
- Expected longevity greater than 20 years

### For Aesthetic Value

- Attractive flowers or foliage
- Expected longevity greater than 20 years
- Unusual species
- Tree form visible from house, road or trail



**With over 8 million people, New Jersey is the Nation's most densely populated state, yet it ranks 9th in the percentage of land area covered by forests.**



A forest is a unique ecosystem that provides renewable resources. Forest management involves all parts of the forest including trees, shrubs, forbs, soils, wildlife, and water. It involves protecting the forests from natural hazards, pests, diseases, and wildfires. Through the use of forest management and conservation practices, forest health and vigor can be improved today and ensure productive forests for tomorrow.

## Summary of Common Forest Management Practices

**Thinning** is designed to remove trees from an overstocked stand. When trees are overcrowded, they are in greater competition for nutrients, sunlight and water. To improve the forest health, forest managers may thin the forest of low quality trees that are competing with healthier trees.

Materials removed from thinning may have value as firewood, fence posts or other specialty uses.

**Cull Tree Removal** is the practice of eliminating diseased, poorly formed, or undesirable trees from the stand. The purpose is to remove weed trees to provide room for the main crop trees such as uncommon species, den trees, well-formed trees, and vigorously growing trees.

**Intermediate Cutting** removes trees from a stand between establishment and the final harvest cutting to provide space for growth of trees that will yield the greatest return in the future. Start thinning at the earliest age that the cutting will be able to provide sufficient wood products to make a profitable operation.

**Harvest cutting** is made in a stand at or near the end of the selected rotation age and done in such a way as to ensure regeneration of a new stand of trees. Perform a harvest cut after the majority of trees in the stand have reached harvest size.

**Crop Tree Release** focuses on releasing and increasing the growth rate of individual trees that have been selected to accomplish specific landowner objectives.

Seeking the advice of a professional forester is highly recommended. A list of approved foresters can be obtained at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Parks and Forestry Website at: [http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/njfs\\_consult\\_foresters.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/njfs_consult_foresters.html)

# Technical Help is Available



Your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists who can help you plan and implement small woodlot improvements. You may be eligible for technical assistance if you own ten acres or more of woodland. You may also be eligible to receive assistance through a state or federal program.

Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so that you can make the best decision for your operation. Simply call your local office listed below to set up an appointment to have someone visit your property.

## USDA-NRCS Service Centers

### **Columbus Service Center**

Burlington, Camden and Ocean counties  
1971 Jacksonville- Jobstown Rd.  
Telephone: **(609) 267-1639**

### **Freehold Service Center**

Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties  
4000 Kozloski Rd.  
Telephone: **(732) 462-0075**

### **Frenchtown Service Center**

Hunterdon, Somerset and Union counties  
687 Pittstown Rd. Suite 2  
Telephone: **(908) 782-4614**

### **Hackettstown Service Center**

Bergen, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren counties  
Bldg #1, 101 Bilby Rd.  
Telephone: **(908) 852-2576**

### **Vineland Service Center**

Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties  
1318 South Main Rd. Bldg 5  
Telephone: **(856) 205-1225**

### **Woodstown Service Center**

Gloucester and Salem counties  
51 Cheney Rd. Suite 2  
Telephone: **(856) 769 - 1126**

For more information on how NRCS can assist you is available on our website!

[www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov)

## Other Online Resources

[www.forestasyst.org](http://www.forestasyst.org) - valuable information related to managing your forest

[http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/njfs\\_consult\\_foresters.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/njfs_consult_foresters.html) - valuable information related to managing your forest

[www.techreg.usda.gov](http://www.techreg.usda.gov) - to find a technical service provider that can provide forestry assistance

<http://www.fs.fed/us/> - US Forest Service - source of statistics in this brochure