

contraventions of the USSR Principles of Forest Legislation. Up to now no-one has really been held responsible for these flagrant violations.

Clear-cut felling operations predominate in the Siberian nut pine stands; selective felling is very slow to catch on. I am very familiar with the Gorno-Altay region, which is the genetic centre of the species. Here the highly-productive Siberian nut pine stands in the black belt have been destroyed almost everywhere because of these felling practices. The mid-sections of the mountains are now being logged intensively and this is the main area for nut harvesting. Over the last twenty years, the Gorno-Altay region as a whole has lost more than 50,000 hectares of Siberian nut pine forests which used to yield an average harvest of 1,000 to 2,000 tonnes of nuts annually. From 40,000 to 50,000 hectares of Siberian nut pine forests are felled annually in the USSR as a whole.

It would be impossible not to mention the poor state of plantation tending as well. As a rule, the cutover areas are overgrown with hardwood species of little commercial value. This means that even the relatively small area covered by Siberian nut pines originally, is getting smaller. As a result, their water-protective, soil-protective and climate-regulating role is lessened as well. This role has always been important since the great rivers of Siberia and the Far East are born in these forests.

The Siberian nut pine is primarily a fruit tree. It was only after the Tomsk Scientific-Practical conference in 1981 that its status as a nut-bearing species was reinstated after a long period of oblivion. This conference drew up recommendations designed to enable operations in the