

The Different Kinds of Trees

"The species mix of the U.S. Pacific Northwest is considered more valuable than that of British Columbia."

ITC Report.

The largest and most productive forests in both Canada and the United States are in the far West. In 1984, 44 per cent of the trees harvested in Washington and Oregon were Douglas fir, a relatively valuable species. In British Columbia Douglas firs accounted for only 9 per cent.

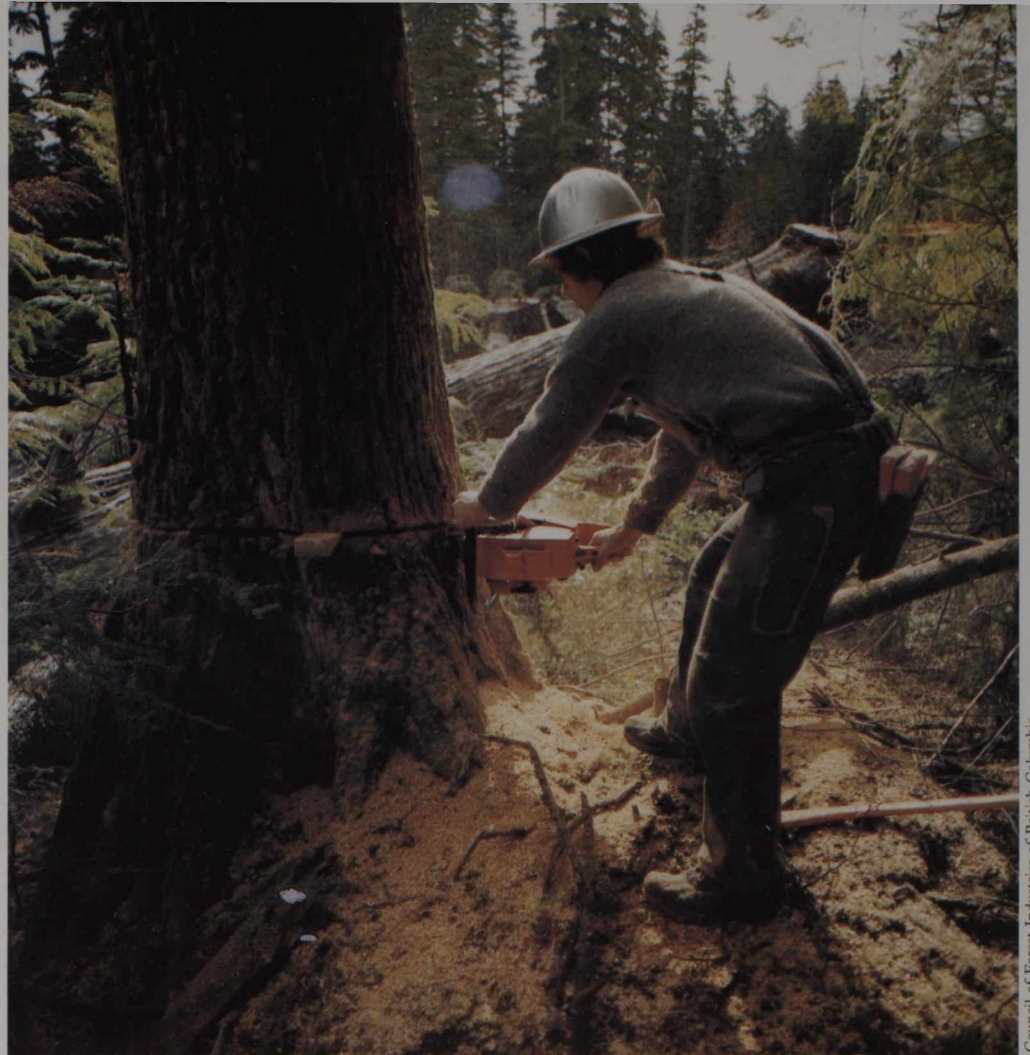
Some species are suited for one commercial purpose, some for another.

Market preferences cross the border. Redwood and red cedar of the Pacific Northwest are preferred for home exterior sidings, white pine for moldings.

West Coast builders prefer Douglas fir and ponderosa pine for framing. Northeastern and southern builders prefer spruce-pine-fir (SPF) for framing and millwork.

SPF accepts nails better than southern pine; it is white, light and doesn't warp; and it is easier to paint or stain. Southern pine is stronger and it accepts preservatives better. It is preferred for load-bearing beams.

The different characteristics of different species and the difference in the



Trees in the mountainous parts of British Columbia are still felled by chain saws.

quality of millwork of the same species in different localities make comparisons of general prices difficult at best and often impossible.

A Misleading Statistic

Some American lumber spokesmen have claimed that the rise in Canadian lumber imports has been spectacular and have cited the fact that the Canadian share of the U.S. market went up from 19 to 32 per cent between 1975 and 1984.

This gives an erroneous picture. The Canadian share in 1975 was uniquely low because the industry was hit by strikes and production was far below normal.

The industry's production and its share in the U.S. market returned to their historical norms in 1976 and 1977. The ITC in its report used Canadian production in normal years to measure change.

The Canadian share has shown only a modest increase. According to the ITC report it went from 28 per cent in 1982 to 29 percent in 1984, a gain of one-half a percentage point a year. The growth closely paralleled the increasing strength of the U.S. dollar, which gives Canadian lumber a 35-per-cent advantage in U.S. dollars.

Sitka Spruce

A Southern Pine

"'To sum it up, the lumber grade is just not as good as it was 10 to 15 years ago,' Tom Hook, of Boozer Lumber Co. in Columbia said. 'Southern pine has too many knots. It warps and, although it meets the needs of customers, they are actually accustomed to receiving better quality than they're getting now'"

"'Gifford Shaw, owner of Shaw Components in Sumter, is one of several truss fabricators who recently switched to Canadian lumber. 'It is just that much better,' Shaw said.

'You'll find most truss fabricators have switched to Canadian spruce over the last few months because it's straighter, lighter, easier to cut, is not as hard on the saws and there is less downgrading in Canadian.

"'We're using 80 per cent Canadian and pay 10 per cent more because we feel we can see the savings in the long run,' he added."

Carolina Forestry Journal, Aug. 1985. (A publication of the South Carolina Forestry Association.)