

Poplar farms

Poplars are used for veneers and in the manufacture of fine paper.

About 10 per cent of Canada's forest is poplar: aspen, balsam poplar and black cottonwood. Most grow in Ontario and Alberta. Until recently, the allowable poplar cut has been used because of a preference for readily available coniferous species, the remote locations of poplar stands, and the high incidence of decay and small tree size among poplars.

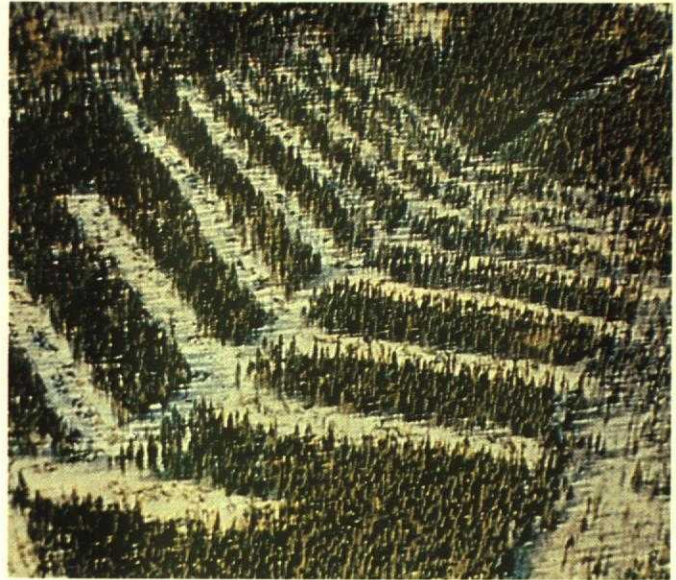
Formal research on poplars began in 1935. Since then, plantations of hybrid aspen in Ontario, spaced at intervals of 2.4 m to 3.1 m, have grown 9.6 m³ to 21 m³/ha at ages 9 to 15, compared with the maximum growth for native aspen of 6.3 m³/ha at 50 to 55 years. Euramerican poplars, appropriately irrigated and fertilized, have produced acceptable pulpwood after only two years. Poplars may also provide livestock feed in the future. Poplar silage, similar to corn silage, with 25 per cent protein by dry weight has been obtained from hybrid poplars cut at the end of July. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and scientists at the University of Toronto have been testing poplar leaf protein concentrate as food for roosters.

The development of poplar farms in Ontario began about ten years ago, when Domtar Inc. warned of a shortage of fibres for fine papers at its Cornwall, Ontario, pulp and paper mill. Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources responded by developing a hybrid

poplar that can be harvested eight to ten years after planting. Some 888 ha of abandoned agricultural land have been planted to date near Brockville.

In 1978, the federal government began annual funding of \$1 million a year for a five-year period, and Domtar (a forest-resources company) has begun buying land near its Cornwall plant for its own tree farms. Growing trees near the plant will cut transportation costs and may provide a supplementary crop for farmers in the region.

Forests are often cut to take advantage of natural regeneration.



Students are hired during the summer to plant saplings.

