

New Black Walnut Trees Grow Up Fast

It used to take about 90 years before black walnut trees were ready to be cut for timber, but new "genetically superior" black walnut trees developed by Purdue University reach maturity in only about 30 years, says Jack Meyer, who's planted about 1,000 of the trees on his Geneva, Ind., farm.

The new trees cost more than conventional seedlings but grow much faster and straighter, says Meyer, who was so impressed with the trees that he became a dealer.

"In the old days you planted a bunch of trees back in the woods and hoped they would live and that deer wouldn't eat them. Growing these new varieties is more like farming," says Meyer. "I plant them in rows, irrigate them, prune them twice a year, put shelters around them, etc. I plant 140 trees per acre in rows 20 ft. apart and space the trees 15 ft. apart within the rows. We plant them in a 'check' pattern the way corn was grown 30 years ago."

During more than two decades, Purdue University researchers collected and grafted wood from over 400 superior black walnut trees from all over the Midwest. Through genetic evaluation in university clone banks, this group was narrowed to nine cultivars, each of which has since been patented. Two of the cultivars are available commercially - Purdue Number One and Tippecanoe Number One. Both are said to possess rapid growth and perfect form. In addition, Purdue Number One is a prolific nut bearer.

Forest geneticist Dr. Walker Beineke says that if you plant the more common varieties of black walnuts, only a handful of the trees will produce veneer-quality wood, even with the best care. "Except for those damaged by outside forces such as lightning, all of the trees produced by these patented varieties should be veneer grade."

Meyer planted his first trees three years ago as 14-in. seedlings and has some that are already 10 ft. tall. A few of them even have nuts on them although nuts aren't normally expected until the seventh year. "In dry weather we usually water the trees



Dr. Walter Beineke measures a 12-year-old genetically-superior black walnut tree on his plantation.

twice a week for two or three hours at a rate of 1 gal. per tree per hour. We also apply liquid fertilizer to the trees once or twice a year," he says. He places 4-ft. tall plastic tubes around young trees. "They protect the trees from deer and other animals and boost growth because they keep the temperature around trees about 10 degrees warmer. The tubes also allow me to spray Roundup so that I can kill weeds without killing the tree."

Grafts of the new trees are available from Purdue and from dealers each spring in limited quantities. When you order seedlings or grafts, you get a 12-page instruction manual and a video tape on taking care of the trees. The American Black Walnut Association will also provide information periodically during the year.

Prices for seedlings and grafts range from \$6 to \$19 apiece.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jack Meyer, 163 S. Drive, Geneva, Ind. 46740 (ph/fax 219 368-9498).

"ROADRUNNERS" BOUGHT THEIR OWN BUS

Start Your Own Travel Group

If you'd like to do more traveling you might want to consider starting your own travel group like the one that FARM SHOW reader Robert Lindsay of Viola, Idaho, joined about 10 years ago.

Lindsay, who's retired, joined a local travel group called the "Idaho Roadrunners". The group owns a 20-passenger bus and hires a tour director to plan their trips to different parts of North America. The tour director organizes all trips and determines the trip schedule. He keeps track of expenses and charges each member so much per mile in order to pay for expenses. He also keeps personal information on each member so that he'll know who to contact in case of an emergency.

"Starting your own travel group has a number of advantages," says Lindsay. "It costs about the same per day as driving by car, but we can spend our time socializing and having fun instead of having to drive. Also, the tour director knows where all the

good places are. If anyone gets tired of the scenery they can just go to sleep. We store our luggage at the back of the bus, with each member allowed one carry-on and one suitcase.

"Since we started the group we've made about 15 trips. Three years ago we traveled to Alaska for 26 days which was a lot of fun. We elect members to a 'board' that votes on group policies. Over the years some members have dropped out but new ones are always joining. One disadvantage to traveling like this is that if you go through a town where a relative or friend lives you can't stop to see them. However, if you wanted you could fly there and make arrangements for the bus to pick you up.

"The tour director gets paid so much per mile for his work. We paid for the bus several years ago."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert E. Lindsay, 5315 Walker Rd., Viola, Idaho 83872 (ph 208 875-0080).



Tim Ogden of the Oregon Bamboo Co. says there's great potential for bamboo in the food, wood and feed markets.

"I MAY BE THE ONLY COMMERCIAL BAMBOO FARMER IN NORTH AMERICA"

Bamboo Farming: New Market Waits To Be Tapped

If you live in an area with a reasonably moderate climate most of the year, an Oregon entrepreneur may have just the sideline business you're looking for.

Tim Ogden of the Oregon Bamboo Co. in Myrtle Creek, Ore., says bamboo farming has the potential to become big business.

"Bamboo comes into production in three years and reaches maximum productivity in seven to eight years, producing five to 10 tons of bamboo shoots per acre per year. We sell everything we can produce off our mature 3-acre grove and we'll be able to sell all the production from our second 3-acre grove, too, when it comes into production," says Ogden who discovered the potential for bamboo at a West Coast Asian produce market five years ago.

Since then, markets have also developed for cane as an alternative wood and, most recently, as winter fodder for livestock. It has 20 to 21 percent protein.

Ogden says he's virtually the only bamboo farmer in North America and distributors pay up to \$2 per pound for his bamboo, which retails for about \$6 per pound as food and wood products.

One reason business is so good is that

the U.S. bans imports of live plants in order to control bamboo thrips, an Asian insect pest.

Bamboo farming is easy, says Ogden, in part because no tillage is required.

He plants varieties that originated in Southwestern China. They're placed every 10 ft. in rows spaced 20-ft. apart. Plants are staked and supplied with a 25-5-5 fertilizer blend every two weeks during spring and summer, when trees can grow as much as 11 in. a day. Bamboo grows back every year, just like your lawn, he adds.

Bamboo could be grown successfully in many parts of the U.S., he says.

"It can survive a couple weeks of 10 below zero weather without too much damage," he says.

Depending on the variety, bamboo ranges from 2 to 72-in. tall and measures 1/4 to 6 in. in dia., he says.

Ogden's company offers informational packets, including a video on bamboo-growing, and samples.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Oregon Bamboo Company, 278 Taylor St., Myrtle Creek, Ore. 97457 (ph 541 863-6834).



Lindsay's group, the "Idaho Roadrunners", bought their own 20-passenger bus and hired a tour director to organize their trips and determine their schedule.