

**Tree Research Center
Department of Forestry
Michigan State University**

**46 Years of Service
1963 - 2009**

Steeped in a colorful tradition, the MSU Forestry Department has over one hundred years of history operating forest tree seedling nurseries. The early nurseries played an important role in Michigan's reforestation efforts following the devastating fires and logging in the 19th century. Today's Tree Research Center builds on the legacy of these original nurseries, focusing on research, teaching, and outreach activities that address forestry challenges in Michigan and throughout the world.

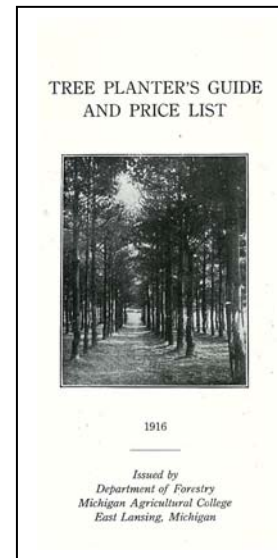
The Nursery Heritage, 1903 – 1962

The MSU Forestry Department operated four seedling nurseries prior to the establishment of the Tree Research Center. The first nursery was started on campus in 1903 on the site currently occupied by the Central Services Building east of Spartan Stadium. To serve northern landowners, a second nursery was established in 1925 at MSU's Dunbar Forest Experiment Station near Sault Ste. Marie. A dramatic increase in seedling demand after World War II prompted nursery expansion. In 1948, the campus Bogue nursery was relocated to a fifteen acre site along Hagadorn Road just south of East Shaw Lane. The Dunbar nursery added ten acres of transplant beds and a new nursery was established in 1949 at MSU's Russ Forest in Cass County.



A primary purpose of these early nurseries was the commercial production of tree planting stock for the state's reforestation programs. Total seedling production through the mid-1950's exceeded sixty-six million trees. In a combined effort, private land owners, the U.S. Forest Service, the Civilian Conservation Corp., and Soil Conservation Districts planted millions of MSU grown seedlings to help restore Michigan's woodlands.

In 1960, commercial production and sale of trees by MSU was discontinued, resulting in the closing of the Russ and Dunbar Forest nurseries. The campus nursery continued operating as a research facility through 1962, when it closed to make room for the construction of Hubbard Halls. One year later, the Forestry Department began development of a new nursery facility directly south of the main campus.



Soon after their establishment, these nurseries were incorporated into the Forestry Department's research and teaching programs. Dozens of reports were published highlighting state-of-the-art nursery technology developed at MSU. For several decades, a forest nursery management class was part of the department's curriculum and forestry students attended summer camp at the Dunbar nursery. An early 1900's report states "student labor was used in the nurseries to train boys in nursery practice and to grow trees to restock woodlots."



The Tree Research Center Today.....

1963 - Present



The 30 acre Tree Research Center was established in 1963 near the intersection of Hagadorn and Jolly Roads on MSU's South Campus Farms. Early activities included development of the irrigated nursery, construction of the main office/shop building, and planting of the demonstration windbreaks. Initial research concentrated on tree genetics and soil fertilization. In the mid-1970's, the greenhouse complex was constructed to enhance research capability in genetics and containerized seedling production. Tree plantation establishment expanded in the early 1980's and one hundred acres of adjacent agricultural land was appropriated for departmental use. Recent improvements include a new storage building, shade structures, and walk-in seedling coolers.

Each year, more than 20,000 trees are grown in the combined nursery/greenhouse system for research in genetics, physiology, silviculture, and ecology. Faculty, staff, and students utilize the Tree Research Center for learning and outreach activities as part of its on-going land grant mission serving Michigan's citizens. As we enter the 21st century, the Tree Research Center will build on its past nursery heritage to address future state and global forestry challenges.

Tree Research Center Highlights.....

- Classroom, field lab, and research work by faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students.
- Early development of forestry herbicide and fertilization use .
- Development of Accelerated Optimal Growth greenhouse technology
- Outreach/extension workshops, tours, and learning programs for the public, professional organizations, and school groups.
- Christmas tree research: early Scotch pine genetics trials, cultural techniques, and today's true fir research
- Dendroremediation research for Michigan's Brownfield Restoration forestry.
- Basic and applied forest seedling ecology research for sustainable forestry
- 30 year hybrid poplar research and ongoing bioenergy program.
- Forest genetics program spanning over 50 years
- On-going studies of wood utilization and treatments
- Forest disease and insect research

