

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
VIRGINIA TECHNICAL NOTE

Forestry #1

FORESTRY DEFINITIONS

NOTE: All definitions are from "The Dictionary of Forestry" edited by John A. Helms, published by the Society of American Foresters, 1998.

**Age class:** one of the intervals into which the age range of trees is divided for classification or use.

**Basal area:** the cross-sectional area of a single stem, including the bark, measured at breast height (4.5 ft.).

**Clear-cut or clearcut:** a stand in which essentially all trees have been removed in one operation.

**Coppice:** 1. the production of new stems from the stump or roots. 2. All trees in the previous stand are cut and the majority of regeneration is from sprouts or root suckers.

**Coppice selection:** only selected stems of merchantable size are cut at each felling, giving uneven-aged stands.

**Crown:** the part of a tree or woody plant bearing live branches and foliage.

**dbh:** diameter at breast height: the diameter of the stem of a tree measured at breast height (4.5 ft.) from the ground.

**Group selection:** trees are removed and new age classes are established in small groups.

**High grading:** the removal of the most commercially valuable trees, often leaving a residual stand composed of trees of poor condition or species composition.

**Release:** a treatment designed to free young trees from undesirable, usually overtopping, competing vegetation.

**Seedtree:** the cutting of all trees except for a small number of widely dispersed trees retained for seed production and to produce a new age class in fully exposed microenvironment.

**Shelterwood:** the cutting of most trees, leaving those needed to produce sufficient shade to produce a new age class in a moderated microenvironment.

**Single-tree selection:** individual trees of all size classes are removed more or less uniformly throughout the stand.

**Site Index:** a species-specific measure of actual or potential forest productivity expressed in terms of the average height of trees included in a specified stand component at a specified index or base age.

**Slash:** the residue left on the ground after logging or accumulating as a result of storm, fire, girdling or delimiting.

**Stand:** a contiguous group of trees sufficiently uniform in age-class distribution, composition, and structure and growing on a site of sufficiently uniform quality.

**Stocking:** the amount of anything on a given area, particularly in relation to what is considered optimum. Basal area is a common stocking index for forest.