

“Forestry Definitions”



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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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.

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