Letters

Not Recommended

"Forest Regeneration Practices: How Regional Certification Standards Compare" (February) addresses more issues than can be discussed in a brief letter. I would, therefore, refer the reader to two pertinent references: Volume 17 of New Forests, which is scheduled to contain the proceedings of a symposium, "Planted Forests, Contributions to Sustainable Societies," and The Forest Chronicle 74(6), 1998, which contains an article by J. Spears, former secretary general, World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development. The first reference presents detailed discussions of the role of loblolly pine, Monterey pine, Douglas-fir, and poplar in plantation forestry throughout the world; the second cites data that contrast the productivity for forest products of plantations with that of natural forests.

I would make several brief comments, based largely on data from western North America, concerning the somewhat contentious allegation that artificial reforestation reduces the genetic base of forest species:

1. Recent studies with Douglas-fir and Sitka spruce utilizing isoenzyme techniques have demonstrated that seed orchard seed has at least the same genetic diversity as "wild" seed.
2. Given the polylembryonic nature of conifers, significant natural selection is inherent in any breeding program.
3. Other data have shown that nursery practices may narrow diversity but provide scenarios to avoid such results.
4. Natural selection for a germinant (Continued on page 36)