In Ireland, lodgepole pine was historically planted largely as a pioneer species on upland peats and western blanket bogs. Initially it seemed very promising in that it was quick to establish on the very poorest of sites. However, it has largely disappointed foresters both in terms of the quality of timber produced and its productivity over a full rotation. Large areas of lodgepole pine are harvested each year and this resource is of great importance to both the Oriented Strand Board (OSB) and Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) mills in the south east of Ireland. Over 2.5 million lodgepole pine transplants are produced and sold by Irish nurseries each year. Coillte, the Irish Forestry Board, manage an area of over 65,000 hectares of the species, making it the second most common conifer in Ireland after Sitka spruce.

**Position in Irish Forestry**

Lodgepole pine is established at a stocking of 2,500 stems per hectare. This is equivalent to 2 metre x 2 metre spacing. Mounding is the cultivation technique currently used but most existing lodgepole pine stands were established following double mould board ploughing. The species generally establishes easily although coastal provenances have a tendency to lean which can result in basal swell with considerable loss of recoverable timber. Young crops generally receive fertiliser in the form of ground rock phosphate (250kg / hectare). On most site types planted with lodgepole pine, thinning has been associated with the onset of varying degrees of windblow. Thinning of the saplings may therefore be suitable only on the deeper more stable sites. Generally, pruning should be a practice confined to the better stands showing good form and on storable sites. Most lodgepole pine stands in Ireland are felled prematurely in an attempt to bring forward the second rotation which will probably favour a different species.

**Non Timber Benefits**

Lodgepole pine is a pioneer species, being one of the first to colonise bare or unused ground. In its native habitat, it is the first species to recolonise burnt ground due to the fact that intense heat, such as that provided by fire or hot sunshine, will open its cones and release seeds. It is thought that its pioneering properties will ameliorate poor sites for a successor crop. The less vigorous north coastal pine is planted as a nurse with Sitka spruce on poorer sites. Lodgepole pine is a popular Christmas tree species.

**Uses & Markets**

Lodgepole pine was traditionally used by native Americans in the construction of lodges, hence its name. The primary market for the species in Ireland is for the manufacture of Oriented Strand Board (OSB) and Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF). For both products, wood is pulped and the wood strands or fibres moulded into boards. Lodgepole pine's distinctive grain and yellowish colour has encouraged its use for panelling. The timber is prone to staining and felled logs need to be processed quickly in order to avoid degrade.

**Further Information**

Further information on growing lodgepole pine can be obtained from your local Forest Service Inspector or any Professional Forester.