

Dec 9th Earth & Sky : - Monoculture Forest

Upcoming Dec 9th Earth and Sky on the topic of Monoculture Forests based on a question from a TN/KY border person.

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## Monoculture Forest

For thousands of years, Native Americans of the southeastern U.S. sometimes burned forests to keep them open for gathering berries and hunting deer. How we treat those forests today -- coming up next on Earth and Sky.

**Thursday, December 9, 2004**

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DB: This is Earth and Sky. Tom Neathamer, who lives on the Tennessee-Kentucky border, wrote to say that mining and logging companies have replaced large areas of leafy hardwood trees in his area with pine plantations.



JB: And he wants to know, "How does the replacement of oak with pine effect our environment . . .?"

Tom, the natural forests in your area include beech, maple, buckeye, birch, oak -- and pine. When you reduce the forest to just one species -- in this case only pine -- you get what's called a "monoculture."

DB: And with a monoculture, you lose diversity - and not just in terms of trees. You also lose plants, shrubs, flowers and grasses that grow between the trees -- and animals, birds and insects that rely on that habitat. Monocultures are also less resilient than a natural forest. One kind of pest or disease can wipe out everything. That's why forests of only pine trees are often heavily treated with pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.

JB: Environmental scientists told us there are healthier reforesting solutions. But they say how we care for our forests depends on what we want from them -- whether our goals regard aesthetics, economics, outdoor recreation or wildlife

preservation.

DB: These goals -- and our methods of achieving them -- are some of the most controversial issues in conservation today. Thanks today to the [U.S. Forest Service](#) and to the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#). We're Block and Byrd for Earth and Sky.

Author(s): Eleanor Imster

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