Reforestation: Bedding for Site Preparation

Benefits:

Bedding gives landowners the option of planting a typically wet sites to pine or hardwoods suited to timber production. As mentioned, bedding concentrates topsoil nutrients while also increasing the soils water holding capacity. Bedding also provides for improved soil aeration allowing critical oxygen to young seedling roots. This combination results in increased growth and greatly increases seedling survival on poorly drained sites. Because of the increased growth rates, trees reach merchantable sizes in shorter periods of time. This shortened rotation will allow landowners the option of harvesting pulpwood and sawlog class materials at a younger age providing faster returns on their initial investment.

Other Recommendations:

Bedding should be done fairly close to planting season, otherwise the beds may lose shape and slump, particularly on wet sites. However, this practice should be applied at least six weeks prior to planting to allow for the freshly bedded soil to settle. Bedding alone does not improve areas with compacted subsoil. In fact, bedding on compacted soils may restrict future rooting of seedlings and interfere with drainage. These compacted soil types should be considered for alternate site preparation methods such as 3 in 1 plowing or ripping. Following the planting operation, it is usually recommended that a release spray containing an herbicide mixture sufficient to control the herbaceous weeds and grasses be applied.