



# Restoring North Carolina's Longleaf Pine Forests

*One of North Carolina's most important tree species is the native longleaf pine. Once stretching across 90 million acres in the coastal Southeastern states from Virginia to Texas, populations of this resilient and valuable tree have dwindled to fewer than 3 million acres. There is a concerted effort in North Carolina and other states where it once thrived to restore the longleaf pine to its historic native range. Private woodland owners, along with government agencies, academic institutions and corporate partners, play a key role in meeting this ambitious goal. Both technical and financial assistance are available to help private woodland owners who wish to establish longleaf pine on their property.*



## What Makes Longleaf Pine Special?

Longleaf pine has many qualities that make it a desirable tree for North Carolina coastal woodland owners. Not only is the longleaf pine a disease-, fire- and hurricane-resistant species, it also:

- Is a valuable source of desirable dense, straight timber, and pine straw that can be harvested for supplemental income.
- Provides important habitat for animal and plant species that prefer the same kind of fire-adapted ecosystem that favors longleaf pine.
- Has higher resistance to disease and insect infestations. This is due to its abundant pine resin production and its genetic adaptation to a natural thinning process that eliminates weaker longleaf pines to give healthy trees more room to grow.
- Lives longer than other pine species, allowing forest



owners greater flexibility in deciding when to harvest the timber. While loblolly pine begins to stagnate and decline after age 50, longleaf pine growth remains consistent or even increases in later years.

## Is My Land Suitable For Longleaf Pine?

In general, longleaf pines prefer acidic, sandy soil that is low in organic matter and has good drainage. Your forester or N.C. extension agent can help you determine if your land is suitable for longleaf pine cultivation. If it is, you may be eligible for technical and cost-share assistance to help you reestablish this native tree on your property. The N.C. Forest Service sells containerized longleaf pine seedlings through its Claridge Nursery. Many commercial nurseries also sell longleaf seedlings.

## Learn More!

- **American Forest Foundation.** Through a grant from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, the American Forest Foundation is working with North Carolina landowners on a project to restore native longleaf pine in the state. For more information, visit <https://www.forestfoundation.org/sfi-aff-innovative-longleaf-conservation-project>
- **North Carolina Forest Service.** The N.C. Forest Service offers assistance in determining whether your land is suitable for longleaf pine cultivation, guidance on planting and growing longleaf pine and access to financial cost-share assistance to eligible North Carolina woodland owners. Visit <http://www.ncforestservic.gov> and type “longleaf pine” into the search box to access the many resources available.
- **North Carolina Financial and Technical Assistance Resources.** The N.C. Forest Service has compiled a spreadsheet of technical assistance programs and financial assistance available to help landowners reestablish longleaf pine forests in our state. Learn about them here: [http://nclongleaf.org/pdfs/assistance\\_programs.pdf](http://nclongleaf.org/pdfs/assistance_programs.pdf)
- **North Carolina Longleaf Coalition.** This coalition provides a comprehensive clearinghouse of resources on the longleaf pine in North Carolina. Visit their website for information on plant nurseries that sell longleaf seedlings, where to get technical assistance, how to find workshops for woodland owners interested in growing longleaf pine and publications about all aspects of longleaf cultivation. Visit <http://www.nclongleaf.org>
- **The Longleaf Alliance** offers many educational opportunities, including an annual three-day intensive course for landowners called “Longleaf 101,” which provides in-depth classroom and field instruction in “all things longleaf,” many individual Longleaf Academy courses and a biennial regional conference. Visit <http://www.longleafalliance.org>

*Information for this fact sheet was compiled from a variety of sources, including the American Forest Foundation, North Carolina Forest Service, North Carolina Longleaf Coalition and The Longleaf Alliance.*

