

# Nursery Operator (GS-9)

## Major Duties

A Forest Service Nursery Operator (GS-9) coordinated the efforts of other employees concerned with the production and development of tree seed and seedlings for National Forest use. A Nursery Operator's job involves;

- Supervising the work for other employees in running nursery operations. This can require monitoring employee performance, conducting performance appraisals, developing budgets, coordinating staff efforts, etc.
- Giving technical advice used to help plan nursery programs
- Monitoring the production of tree seed and seedlings
- Experimenting with different techniques to improve growth of seedlings
- Preparing reports describing seed and seedling characteristics
- Recommending priorities seedling development in the future
- Advising land managers of the capabilities and limitations of seed and seedling types for a variety of contemplated uses and activities (e.g., timber sales, watershed rehabilitation projects, transportation planning, recreation development, etc.)
- Training other personnel in how to care for nursery resources.

This career includes many different assignments and involves making recommendations about many resource areas. A Forest Service Nursery Operator needs to be able to analyze and determine the characteristics of different types of seedlings. The work requires walking over rough and uneven land, with continuous bending, crouching, and stopping. Nursery Operators work in both the office and field.

## A Typical Day

Tom started working for the Forest Service after graduating with a college degree in science. His first Forest Service job was a Laborer Leader (GS-2). In that job he worked in a Forest Service nursery doing many different things including

- Pulling and counting seedlings for planting
- Sorting seedlings according to size, appearance, and physical damage
- Packing seedlings in boxes and bales for shipment
- Threading seedlings for transplanting
- Dusting and spraying seedbeds and nursery stock
- Raking and gathering moss and leaf mold
- Raking seedbeds for planting
- Planting and fertilizing nursery stock

Now, Tom's job is to supervise the overall nursery operations. That means he spends most of the day coordinating this employee's work. Tom makes sure nursery jobs like those mentioned above are done properly to meet the demand for seedlings. He also spends time in meetings and planning for future needs by staying on top of changes in the forest.

## Nursery Operator

### Career Sheet #17

#### Page 2

## Knowledge and Education

A college degree is recommended for those interested in becoming a Forest Service Nursery Operator. Important courses to take in college include;

- Math
- Biology & Chemistry
- Physical Science (Earth Science)
- Business
- Hydrology

## Career Path

Jobs that lead to becoming a Nursery Operator (GS-9) include

- **Laborer Leader (GS-2)** – This is a labor position that is useful for gaining an understanding of nursery operations. Duties include;
  - Pulling and counting seedlings for planting
  - Sorting seedlings according to size, appearance, and physical damage
  - Packing seedlings in boxes and bales for shipment
  - Threading seedlings for transplanting
  - Dusting and spraying seedbeds and nursery stock
  - Raking and gathering moss and leaf mold
  - Raking seedbeds for planting
  - Planting and fertilizing nursery stock
  
- Valuable experience leading to becoming a Nursery Operator can be gained from many other jobs like Forester, Soil Scientist, Wildlife biologist, etc.