

## What do contestants say?

“We were done creating all three plots in just three hours total. The process was efficient and fun. Next year it will be easy to remeasure the trees to determine growth. We are learning how to put the growth on our most valuable trees.”

(C. Stackhouse, Yates County)



“We used a tape measure to lay out the plots and we identified the trees with paint and numbered aluminum tags that my Dad (Jeff) made. My Grandfather and Dad made the tree measurements with a logging tape and I recorded the data. I definitely enjoyed it and we had a great time as a family in the woods. I think we have a very good shot at winning.”

(J. Piestrak, Steuben County)

“It was great to spend time in the woods together with our forester Erin [O’Neil] and we all got to know each other better. We worked as a team marking, measuring and collecting the data. We discussed TSI strategies and forest health. Teams consisting of land-owners and foresters with the common goal of growing quality timber in a fun environment is really a good idea. Annual forest measurements takes the guess work out of growing timber.”

(K. Edwards, Fulton County)



## Summary of the categories

*Conifer type* – The conifer type is for entries where the majority of trees are conifers. Common conifers might include white pine, red pine, hemlock, Norway spruce, red spruce, balsam fir and cedar. Other conifers might also be used.

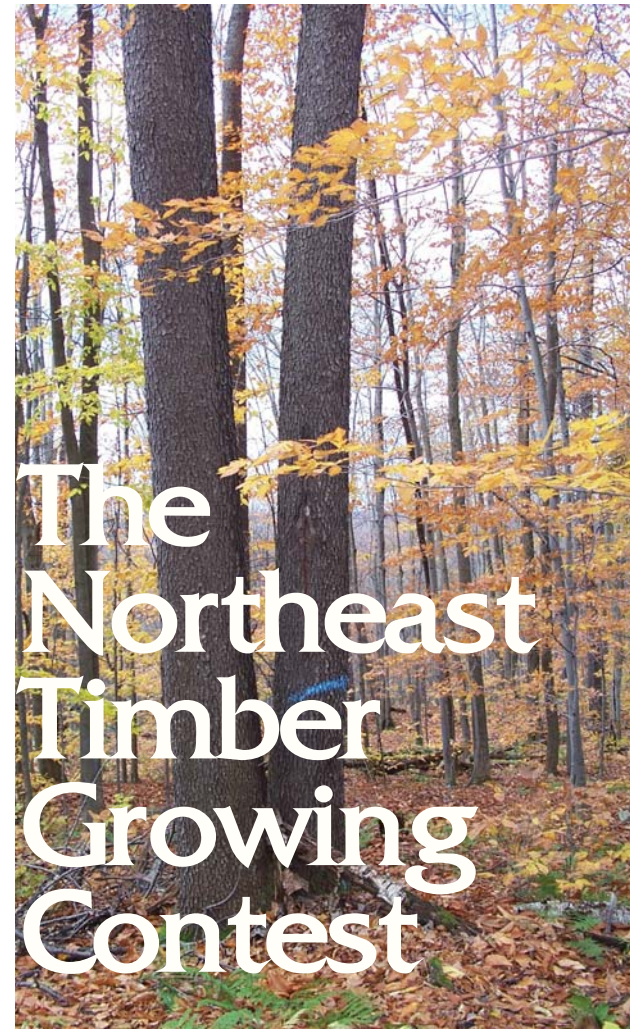
*Hardwood type* – Hardwoods are broadleaved-trees and include, for example, maples, oaks, beech, aspen, locust, hickory, etc.

*Basal Area Increment* – The intent of this production category is to focus on the maximum wood volume increment. The woods do not have to have been managed, but thinning will increase tree growth. This category has the easiest methods for an owner to participate in the contest. Simply, this category measures how much wood is accumulated on trees.

*Board Foot Volume Increment* – The intent of this production category is to focus on production of commercially valuable sawtimber. The woods do not have to have been managed, but correct thinning will increase the growth of high quality timber. Document the volume growth of sawtimber quality trees as measured by board foot increment.

*Seedling Height Growth* – The intent of this production category is to focus on areas that have been regenerated to produce the next forest. Prior harvests will have provided sufficient sunlight to allow seedlings to establish. In this production category, an owner may make a single visit and measure the height growth increment of the previous or current growing season on seedlings.

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The Northeast Timber Growing Contest is designed to help improve the long-term productivity and health of small private woodlands in the northeastern forest. Landowners and forestry professionals can work together in a process that includes education, research, technology transfer, and friendly competition. The end result is that woodlot owners know more about how their trees grow, and what makes them healthy and productive.

### ***What's Involved?***

Woodlot owners from anywhere in the Northeast select trees in their woods, tag those trees, and track changes in growth from one year to the next (see the rule book for details). Owners can work with a forester to learn how to thin their woods to improve tree growth and improve the chances of winning.

### ***Do I have to cut trees?***

You don't have to cut trees. However, by monitoring growth of trees, you know which are growing and which are stagnant. Knowing what makes some trees grow allows you to pick the "losers" for firewood and concentrate growth on the best timber.

### ***Why Participate?***

It's fun! Challenges are a way to focus the mind to achieve a desirable outcome. Being in your woods with your family is rewarding and increasing the volume and quality of timber in your woodlands increases the value of your asset.



The Timber Contest is set as a friendly competition, but is really designed to allow owners to learn about their trees and help their timber become the best it can become. Owners can compete in any of several categories (see back panel). Because some soil is better than other soil, the growth of trees is adjusted to allow owners to compete on a level field.

Because owners have different interests and woods, there are different ways they can participate. Owners will choose to participate in the hardwood or the conifer type category. In addition to type, owners will select the board foot, basal area, or regeneration production categories. There are six different combinations of type and production categories, and an owner could submit one entry for each, though most owners just select one of the combinations.

For each of the different entries an owner might submit, they will need to measure some trees in their woods. Also, public schools or home schoolers can "adopt a woods" and submit an entry as well. The details of the measurements are described in the rule book, but essentially the owner will tag several trees, record some simple measurements about those trees, and then repeat the measurements after one or more growing seasons. The percentage change in growth is used to describe how well a group of tagged trees performed. For the board foot category, the owner will need to work with a professional forester. In all cases, the owner can cut trees to help the tagged trees grow faster.



The effort to participate is minimal. Most owners will spend 3 or 4 hours in the first visit, and only an hour or two for remeasurement. The website includes all the necessary details on what to measure, and includes data sheets the owner can print and use in their woods with a clipboard and pencil. A few supplies are needed, and those can be obtained through several possible vendors.

Participants in the Timber Growing Contest have found the experience invigorating and exciting. They all start with an interest in trees, and the process of watching individual trees helps them learn to identify which trees are winning and which trees are losing in their quest for sunlight. In some cases, participation has been a way to help multiple generations of a family connect with their property and invest the youth in the forests of tomorrow.



The prize of winning is the glory of knowledge. The winning teams, which may include owners, foresters and loggers, will be presented each year in the New York Forest Owner Association magazine. There are no cash or product prizes. The thrill of knowing you know your trees better is priceless.