

PLANT PATHOLOGY

Mimosa Trees Menaced By New Fungus Disease

MIMOSA trees, whose bright flowers and delicate, feathery, gray-green foliage are a delight to winter sojourners in Southern resorts, are menaced by a new disease, apparently caused by a soil-dwelling fungus.

Little is known about the disease, except that it kills the trees very quickly and spreads rapidly. Its center of distribution, reports Dr. George H. Hepting of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, is at Tryon, N. C., and dead trees have been found as far north as Richmond, Va., and as far south as LaGrange, Ga.

Diseases that may be early stages in tree-killing epidemics are also being studied by Department scientists in willows, oaks, shortleaf pines, Monterey cypress and Douglas fir. Two deadly diseases menace the American elm, and the London plane tree, favorite in cities because of its resistance to smoke, is under attack in centers along the Atlantic seaboard. Millions of dollars are being spent to save white pines from blister rust. The persimmon, whose wood is unequalled for golf club heads, will probably soon join the already extinct native chestnut. America's trees are in greater danger than most Americans realize.

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CLOSE UP

This is how the trees on the facing page looked at nearer view.

POPULATION

Low Birth Rate Linked With Finland's Economic Progress

FINLAND, today in the limelight as a country which has done well with meager resources, appears to owe its success partly to a declining birth rate and emigration, both of which have kept down crowding of farm population, that plagues central Europe.

A report (*Population Index*, January) shows that the Finnish birth rate has tobogganed an irregular but mainly downward course for two centuries. From 45 births per 1,000 population in mid-eighteenth century, the birth rate stood at 20 per 1,000 in 1937. Thanks to the Swedish parish system of registering vital statistics, Finland has a continuous record of births and deaths from 1750, to show trends.

Characterizing Finland as predominantly rural, though with a strong recent trend toward city and industrial development, the report says that most of Finland's farmers hold small land areas, but three-fifths of the farm families own their land. Only seven per cent of the land is cultivated. The soil is thin, deficient in lime and phosphorus. Marshlands are so acid that it takes generations of cultivation to make them productive. Factors which have enabled the Finns

to achieve a reasonably satisfactory adjustment of population to their resources without extreme wealth or extreme poverty include intelligent use of these meager resources, the cultural level of the people, forward-looking social legislation.

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