

**PURPOSE:** Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) is the process of pruning, thinning and controlling competing vegetation in a stand of timber to increase the growth rate and value of the trees.

There may be federal and state cost-share programs available to help cover the cost of these practices. Contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resource & Conservation Service Agency (NRCS) office for further information.

The following is a brief description of TSI practices commonly used in Alabama forestlands.



**HERBACEOUS WEED CONTROL:** Herbicides are used to curb growth of weeds and grass the first year after planting to increase survival and growth of seedlings.

**PINE RELEASE:** Herbicides are applied to older (2+ year-old) pine plantations to control certain vines, brambles, woody brush and trees.

**PRESCRIBED BURNING:** Prescribed burning is fire applied in a skillful manner under exacting conditions to a specific area for a definite forest management objective. Prescribed burning eliminates wildfire fuels, prepares sites for tree planting, improves visibility for recreation, increases growth of many flowering annuals and other plants, improves habitat of many fire dependent species including the gopher tortoise, indigo snake and red-cockaded woodpecker, and much more. Close to one million acres are prescribed burned each year in Alabama.

**PRECOMMERCIAL THINNING:** Precommercial thinning releases crowded pine stands to prevent stagnation and increase growth on remaining trees. It produces no immediate income for the landowner, but the cost is justified by the increased value of future growth. Thinning can be done by hand, using chainsaws, brush-hooks, axes or mechanical equipment, such as heavy-duty bush-hogs, or other mechanical thinning systems.

**PRUNING:** Pruning of pine increases the amount of wood free of knots and other blemishes in the first 16 feet of the tree, bringing a higher market price.

Photo Credit: Alabama Forestry Commission



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