

The Life & Times of Loblolly Pine

A Tree's Personal Diary

People aren't the only living things that keep a record of their lives. Trees keep diaries too! A tree records the events of its life through the rings that grow inside its trunk. These rings can tell us almost everything about a tree. Let's see what we can learn about one particular 35-year-old called Loblolly.



1966



My seedling is planted in the moist earth...I am born.

1971



It's my fifth birthday! I grew fast because I had lots of rain and sunshine during the spring and summer. As I grow, I add new layers of wood to my trunk. By counting my dark rings, you can tell how old I am!

1978



I am growing straight, but my neighbors are growing too, and their roots and crowns (tops) are cutting into my supply of water and sunshine.

1982



Somebody has cut down my neighboring trees! Now that those big guys are gone, my roots can spread out for more food from the ground... and my crown can reach up for more sun from the sky. I feel another growth spurt coming on!

1985



I was in my first fire this year. Luckily, I only got scarred. I'm forming new wood every day, which covers more and more of my scar.

1987



Insects are giving me a hard time and causing my rings to grow narrow again. The sawfly larva (maggots) are REALLY on my case. Oh, well. If I can survive fire, maybe I can make it through this.

1996



This drought is stunting my growth! One or two summers without rain wouldn't be so bad, but the longer it's dry, the slower I grow.

2001



I feel great! I'm getting plenty of light and water, my branches are growing strong and healthy, and my needles are a vibrant green. Right now, I would have to say... *life is good!*