

# WOOD AND FIBER

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## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSPECTIVE

The past fifty-year period has seen extensive specialization in academia, business, and government. This has resulted from the philosophic notion that society benefits most if each of us knows more and more about less and less.

It would be unfair to proclaim that this has no merit. Yet critical examination suggests that this extremely narrow perspective has had a negative effect on what we do and how well we communicate what we have done. It seems to me that we should broaden our perspective so that we know more and more about more and more.

To those satisfied with the world as it is and to those who automatically object to any change, this notion will have no appeal; however, it is a magnificent opportunity for a renaissance movement.

I recommend that we continue to specialize, but within the framework of a very broad perspective. This will require more time and effort by each scientist. The potential benefit is enormous as an expanded view of the world begins to influence what each scientist selects to investigate in his area of specialization as well as his approach to each particular investigation.

It is often said that the perspective of a scientist is molded during the formative years of graduate study. Therefore I propose some courses in philosophy in lieu of a total diet of scientific and technical courses.

Beginning then and continuing throughout his career, each scientist should regularly read such journals as *Science*, *Scientific American*, and *American Scientist* and also the many excellent books on science. This will not only help maintain a broad perspective of science but will also establish and maintain constant humility, for there is simply so much that one person cannot comprehend everything.

The Complete Forest Concept, which recognizes a continuum from the seed to the product in the hands of the consumer, is a logical extension of a broad perspective into the field of forestry. The wood scientist must become intimate with all aspects of forest growth to appreciate and understand fully the inter-relationships between man and his environment on this very small planet in order to intelligently pursue wood science and technology.

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