



Without a doubt, it's pollen season. And if there can be a "good" pollen season, this sure has been one. Chances are you have reached for a Kleenex or two these last few weeks. But have you? Or was it a Puffs? See, Kleenex is a brand name, but over time has become the name we call a tissue. And all tissue is the same, right? The folks that make Puffs probably disagree – *strongly*.

The same can be said for a brand name used by seedling providers. ArborGen's Open-Pollinated Elite (OP Elite) has the same name as other providers' elite: same name, VERY different seedling. And you could be paying more for lower genetic quality. Here's why.

Over the past decade, the language for describing tree performance has evolved from the less useful "generation" terminology to category designations such as Advanced, Select, and Elite, which are based entirely on performance.

However, for these designations to be helpful, you must understand what each term means, which can vary from company to company. By not understanding the different criteria companies use for determining the level of genetics, you risk paying too much for your seedlings and not getting the performance you expect.

ArborGen	other providers
ELITE (Top 3%) ✓	⊘
SELECT (Top 4% -10%)	"elite" (7-56)
ADVANCED (Top 11% -25%)	"select"
⊘	"advanced"

ArborGen Elite Comparison Chart

Some companies market the industry stand-by 7-56 as Elite. ArborGen sells the same seedling as Select, our "middle grade" (Advanced, Select, Elite), because we use more stringent criteria for categorizing our seedlings. Within ArborGen, Elite is considered the best among [OP families](#) or the top 3 percent in an index combining growth and the quality traits such as fusiform rust resistance, stem straightness, and forking reduction. A tissue by Kleenex is not necessarily the same quality tissue as Puffs. Their OP Elite is not our [OP Elite](#).

Make sure you compare apples to apples when comparing one provider's seedlings with another. Ask for the data to ensure you get what you think you are paying for. Ask your Reforestation Advisor to explain the difference between ours and theirs.

Did You Know? The Language Has Changed...



Seedling suppliers have moved away from "generation" vocabulary for over a decade. Tree improvement foresters have known for years it is not how old the tree is. Instead, it is crucial to understand the genetic performance of an individual family. On average, second-generation loblolly pine families were better than first-generation selections. In theory, third-generation families would represent an improvement over second and first-generation material. But this is not always the case. Some first-generation families still outperform second and even third-generation selections. New categorical designations such as Advanced, Select, and Elite have replaced "generation" and are a part of our modern



Genetic Value:

Growth/Productivity
Rust Resistance

Stem Straightness
Forking Reduction

reforestation language.

The genetic value created from an individual loblolly pine family can be attributed to four main criteria: growth/productivity, fusiform rust resistance, stem straightness, and forking reduction. This criterion applies to **Open Pollinated (OP)** and **Mass Control Pollinated (MCP®)** seedlings. OP is synonymous with first, second, and third generation, where we know the mother's genetic contribution but not the father's (pollen source). MCP families use the best OP families to make control crosses of known mothers and fathers, providing a much improved seedling.

Bullard Nursery Operations & Genetics Tour



Nursery Operations & Genetics Tour

Join us for a tour of the Bareroot and ALL NEW Container Nursery at Bullard and a Forest Genetics Presentation for Western Gulf Foresters and Landowners.

- Genetics Overview and Product Development
- Bareroot & Container Seedling Crop Visits
- Forest Genetics Demonstration

Click on the "Register" button below to see the agenda and RSVP. We hope to see you there!

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Paul Jeffreys, Ph.D.

Western Tennessee,
Alabama, and Mississippi
205-712-9582

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Austin Heine

North Carolina and Virginia
910-660-3209

[See More](#)



Shannon Stewart

Eastern Texas, Southern
Louisiana
936-239-6189

[See More](#)



Kylie Burdette

South Carolina
864-650-4454

[See More](#)



Jason Cromer

Florida Gulf Coast, South
Alabama, Georgia
229-310-0648

[See More](#)



Greg Hay

Arkansas, Northern
Louisiana, and Oklahoma
501-350-4217

[See More](#)



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Director, U.S. Sales
404-840-7489

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2011 Broadbank Court
Ridgeville, S.C. 29472

888.888.7158

info@arborgen.com



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