Since the natural edaphic factors in plant distribution have already been distributed over wide areas, it now rests with the soil surveyor to recognize them wherever they exist. He is by profession a trained observer of the soil horizons under the vegetation which they support. While he may not be a trained ecologist, he may have little knowledge of systematic botany, yet he cannot long engage in soil mapping without mentally noting the distribution of plant roots and the general characteristics of the living ground cover. He does not possess those characteristics which make for success in his field if he is not sufficiently interested in what his eyes can see each time he makes a soil profile examination, if he remains long unfamiliar with at least the common name of the principal species which are characteristic of the larger soil types with which he deals. It is our belief that many soil surveyors are possessed of too great an inferiority complex in regard to their qualifications to record observations which are of real ecologic significance. If he does no more than include in his soil survey report the locations and main characteristics of virgin forests or prairies wherever they survive within the area mapped, it affords a starting point for further study by the trained ecologist, and gives him an appreciation of the edaphic possibilities which may operate in a particular case in question. We have frequently criticized the ecologist for overlooking factors which seem obvious to the pedologist. In this way we can arouse his interest showing our own.

Of especial timely interest are the edaphic factors involved in large-scale efforts to restore something approaching the natural soil cover through reforestation, soil erosion control planting, shelter-belt zones, etc. A specific case, the widespread discussion of the merits of the proposed governmental shelter-belt in the Great Plains region serves as an excellent illustration. Much of the confused thinking in regard to this project lies in a failure to properly appreciate the edaphic factors involved. Much fundamental knowledge in regard to the soil conditions within an area which limit or favor tree planting would be now available if the soil survey had some information in regard to where trees, either natural or planted, have been successful.

It is the hope of this committee that soil surveyors who make observations of interest will make a larger use of the programs by presenting short papers on the outstanding phases of their findings. In addition to the inclusion of more information of ecologic interest in their soil survey reports.